

"The Partition of Bengal and its Annulment - a Survey of the  
Schemes of Territorial Redistribution of Bengal (1902-1911)"

Syed Zawwar Husain Zaidi

Thesis submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy,  
in the University of London.

School of Oriental and African Studies,

October 1964



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### Abstract

The study deals with the administrative reorganisation and territorial redistribution of the province of Bengal. Chapter I examines the unwieldy nature of the pre-partition province and reviews the various plans propounded by successive Lieutenant-Governors and Viceroy for the reconstruction of Bengal. Chapter II deals with the proposals to curtail the boundaries of Bengal. It also examines the plans for the general territorial redistribution of the provinces of British India so as to throw light on the evolution of the partition scheme of 1903. An examination of the public reaction to the scheme of 1903 as well as the official response to the objections put forward against the original plan has been made in Chapter III. Chapter IV discusses the partitioning of Bengal into two provinces - Bengal and East Bengal and Assam, bringing into light the role of St. John Brodrick, the Secretary of State, and its impact on subsequent events. Chapter V deals briefly with the anti-partition agitation. Chapter VI examines the problems which confronted Lord Hardinge on his assumption of power, his stand on the partition question, the need of a boon on the occasion of the visit of King George V and the final undoing of the partition in 1911 and the shifting of the capital to Delhi. Finally, Chapter VII examines the aftermath of the annulment - reaction of the Bengalis and the Muslims - as well as the attitude of certain officials and members of Parliament towards the changes.

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### Abbreviations

B.N.N.R.	Bengal Native Newspaper Reports. <sup>1</sup>
B.M.	British Museum.
C.C.	Curzon Collection.
Curzon's Speeches.	Speeches by Lord Curzon of Kedleston, Viceroy and Governor-General of India.
Commr.	Commissioner.
Debs.	Debates.
Dept.	Department.
E.B. & A.	East Bengal and Assam.
Encl.	Enclosure.
For. Gov.-Gen.	Foreign. Governor-General.
H.C.	House of Commons.
H.P.	Hardinge Papers.
H.L.	House of Lords.
H.C.	Hardinge Collection.
I.H.P.P.	India Home Public Proceedings.
I.H.J.P.	India Home Judicial Proceedings.
I.N.C.	Indian National Congress.
J.L.P.	John Lawrence Papers.
J. & P.	Judicial and Public.
K.A.O.	Kent Archives Office, Maidstone.
L. No.	Letter Number.
Memo.	Memorandum.
N.T.C.I.	Notes. Public-A, 1903, Territorial Changes in India, <u>Curzon Collection</u> .

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1. See Appendix A.

N.R.P.B.	Government of India, Home Department, Public-A, Proceedings. February 1905, Nos.155-167. Reconstruction of the Province of Bengal and constitution of a new Province to be called the North Eastern Province, <u>Curzon Collection</u> , Vol.247.
Offg.	Officiating.
P.D.	Public Despatches.
P.L.	Public Letters.
Pol.	Political.
P.P.	Parliamentary Papers.
Procs.	Proceedings.
Sec.	Secretary.
U.L.C.	University Library, Cambridge.

## Introduction

After the acquisition of diwani in 1765, ~~the province~~ Bengal grew up into an unwieldy province as regards territorial extent and problems of internal administration. Its boundaries, like the boundaries of some other provinces, were not carved on any rational basis but were the outcome of historical accidents and administrative expediency. It did not take long before the problem of governing a sprawling, ill-assorted and populous province with an inadequate machinery forced itself on Government. From time to time plans and schemes were formulated to reduce its size or reorganise its government, but with little success.

The masterful Curzon, who claimed to have "undertaken a work of reform in India in almost every branch of the administration such as has not been attempted at any period during the past half century",<sup>1</sup>

did not allow the matter to rest there. In a reign bristling with controversial reforms, the most striking was the Partition of Bengal. Lovat Fraser treated it as Curzon's main achievement, believing that by it Curzon "will probably be best remembered".<sup>2</sup> Oddly enough, the judgement has proved true.

The partition has either been acclaimed as "the greatest blunder" since the days of Clive, or <sup>as</sup> Curzon's main achievement. Curzon's critics attribute it to a policy of divide and rule; his eulogists call it an admirable

1. Curzon to Balfour - 5 Feb. 1903; Balfour Papers, 49732, B.M.

2. Fraser, L., India Under Curzon & After, pp. 198 & 396. It is interesting to note that what Fraser regarded as the first amongst Curzon's achievements, treating the rest of Curzon's reign merely as a "footnote" to that achievement, he had earlier discounted by writing to Dunlop-Smith, Minto's Private Secretary, that "the partition was geographically imperfect" and that "the manner of its accomplishment was open to objection". See Lovat Fraser to Dunlop-Smith - 13 Feb. 1909; Minto Papers, M984. Also see Reed, S., The India I Knew, 1897-1947, pp. 46-8.

administrative move. The partition, effected by Curzon in 1905, divided the province of Bengal into two - Bengal consisting of Bihar, Orissa, Chota Nagpur, Sambalpur and its Feudatory States, the Presidency and Burdwan Divisions, and East Bengal and Assam, comprising Assam, the Chittagong, Dacca and Rajshahi Divisions, excluding Darjeeling but with Malda and Hill Tippera. The partition was opposed by the Bengalis (the term Bengali used in the thesis denotes the Bengali-speaking Hindus of Bengal) who carried on a long and bitter agitation against it. Nevertheless both Minto and Morley refused to disturb it and pronounced it a "settled fact". It was only when the agitation had subsided and the new province had acquired an air of permanency that Hardinge chose to dismember the work on which Lovat Fraser had based Curzon's main title to greatness.

In 1911, Hardinge modified the plan of 1905 by uniting the five Bengali-speaking divisions and constituting them into a province with a Governor and Executive Council. Bihar and Orissa were made a separate province under a Lieutenant-Governor and Assam reverted to its former position as a Chief-Commissionership and the capital was shifted to Delhi.

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Despite the various pronouncements made about the partition, no comprehensive study has so far been made of the project of 1905 or that of 1911, though there is hardly any work dealing with Indian Nationalism in the twentieth century which does not refer to the partition and its after effects. Contemporary writers like C.J. O'Donnell, H.W. Nevinson and Sir Henry Cotton<sup>1</sup> all referred to it in their

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1. O'Donnell, Charles James, joined I.C.S. 1877, held various civil appointments in Bengal, Magistrate & Collector, appointed Commr. 1898, retired April 1900, M.P. for Walworth Jan. 1906-1910. Nevinson, H.W., Manchester Guardian Correspondent in India, 1907-8, War Journalist, 1909-19. Cotton, Sir Henry, joined I.C.S. 1867, held various civil appointments in Bengal, Offg. Commr. Chittagong, 1879 & 1884, Chief Sec. Bengal, July 1892, Chief Commr. Assam, Nov. 1896, additional member Viceroy's Council Dec. 1900, retired 1902, M.P. for Nottingham Jan. 1906-1910.

works but they laid emphasis on the agitation and unrest that followed partition rather than upon its genesis, for all three authors had witnessed the partitioning of Bengal and taken a leading part in the fight against it. Their approach was naturally affected by the stand they took, and their purpose in writing was rather to secure as much support for their own line of reasoning as they could amass, than to produce works of scholarship. This often caused a variance of opinion amongst them. For instance, O'Donnell while discussing the attitude of the officials towards Curzon's partition noted that "practically the whole Civil Service of Bengal was hostile" to the project and that

"the great mass of officials in Bengal condemned it as the most unsuitable possible for the Province, as injurious to British administration and as financially wasteful". 1

But we find Cotton diametrically opposed to this view, stating that the plan was

"not without its attraction to the members of the Civil Service who saw before them a glittering vista of additional offices and emoluments". 2

If the understanding of the partition project has suffered at the hands of these writers, the subsequent writings on the subject have not been particularly illuminating. Lovat Fraser and Ronaldshay each devoted a chapter to the problem. Fraser had no access to Curzon Papers, while Ronaldshay, who made use of them, was obliged to give partition only a tiny place in his voluminous work on Curzon.

In such works as Surendra-Nath Banerjea's The Nation<sup>A</sup> in Making, Haridas Mukherjee and Uma Mukherjee's India's Fight for Freedom - or The Swadeshi Movement (1905-1906) and Dr. R.C. Majumdar's History of the Freedom Movement in India (Volume II) again we find but little account of the partition

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1. O'Donnell, C.J., The Causes of Present Discontents in India, pp.56, 62.
  2. Cotton, H., Indian and Home Memories, p.313.

scheme and its objectives. Like O'Donnell or Cotton, they assume the role of fighters against partition and so have presented only a one-sided picture.

Various London University theses also refer to the partition project. P.C. Ghosh, Sufia Ahmed and J.R. McLane have all devoted some space to its discussion.<sup>1</sup> Except for McLane, none of these scholars had access to Curzon Papers and they had therefore to rely upon Parliamentary Papers, Government records etc., and such private papers as were open for the period. The Curzon Papers at the British Museum which McLane used, and which are only a part of the huge collection now obtained by the India Office Library, do not seem to have revealed the whole partition story to him. Moreover, in his thesis, as in the others mentioned, the problem of partition was no more than one of the many issues treated.

If the partition story remains to be told,<sup>2</sup> its modification in 1911 remains unexplained.<sup>3</sup> Hence the need for the present study, which describes and examines the various schemes propounded by the Government of India for the

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1. Ghosh, P.C., The Development of Indian National Congress 1892-1909, subsequently published as a book.  
 Ahmed, S., Some Aspects of the History of the Muslim Community in Bengal, 1884-1912.  
 McLane, J.R., The Development of Nationalist Ideas and Tactics and the Policies of the Government of India, 1897-1905.
  2. An article written by the present writer deals only with the political motive in the partition. See Zaidi, Z.H., "The Political Motive in the Partition of Bengal, 1905", Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society, Karachi, April 1964.
  3. Also see Eustis II, F.A., & Zaidi, Z.H., "King, Viceroy and Cabinet: The Modification of the Partition of Bengal, 1911", History, (Vol. XLIX (1964)). The article was mainly based on a part of Hardinge Papers at the Cambridge University Library. Since the writing of the article, certain volumes have been added to Hardinge Papers at Cambridge and another collection of Hardinge Papers is now available at the Kent Archives Office. These papers as well as a part of the Crewe Papers throw new light on the question of modification.

territorial redistribution of Bengal. It lays emphasis on the objectives and motives behind the schemes and the deliberations, discussions and arguments that led to the partition in 1905 and also throws new light on the curious approach to its annulment or modification in 1911. Since the agitation against partition does not form part of the main theme, only a brief examination of the subject has been made. Similarly, the Muslim response to the partition has not been dealt with, as that has been already covered by Sufia Ahmed in her thesis.

Chapter IPrelude to Partition

By the middle of the eighteenth century India no more enjoyed a strong, central government. The chaos and confusion which followed the dismemberment of the Mughal Empire also witnessed the transformation of the country into congeries of independent and semi-independent authorities. It was still, however, a continent held by cavalrymen and ruled from ancient inland capitals. But the days of the old style rulers were numbered. Round the coasts of India the European trading settlements were growing in vigour and importance, most notably those of the English East India Company. These settlements of the Company were by contrast those of merchants arriving by sea, communicating by sea and concerned with the sea-borne traffic of the whole Indian Ocean. Their first territorial interests, as they came to acquire them, were likewise those of merchants. They seized upon the delta ports of Bengal and her economic hinterland, muslin-weaving East Bengal, the silk villages of Murshidabad, the saltpetre districts of Patna; on the Coromandel coast they took the weaving villages of the coastal plain; and on the West coast occupied the unrivalled harbour of Bombay. The Company, ruling from three quite novel capitals at Calcutta, Madras and Bombay, necessarily cut across the older administrative patterns of India. Their subsequent acquisitions, made in response to the changing military and political needs of the hour, likewise took little heed of older patterns, here leapfrogging Oudh to take in Rohilkhand, there absorbing Tanjore, but not Travancore, leaving some allies in existence, acquiring the territories of others by the accident of failure of direct heirs. The formation of the conquered tracts into units of administration naturally reflected the piecemeal way in which they had been acquired, and showed little regard for racial or linguistic affinities. Moreover, until late in the day, new territories were merely added to the existing Presidency administrations. Thus to



Bombay was added Sind; to Madras, Cannara on the West coast; while to the original Diwani grant of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa made in 1765 were added Benares and Ghazipur in 1775, Cuttack in 1803, parts of modern Uttar Pradesh in 1801 and 1803, Assam, Arakan and Tenasserim in 1824<sup>1</sup> and even Penang, Singapore and Malacca to make Bengal the most unwieldy of them all.<sup>2</sup>

The administrative machinery to deal with these great and often very diverse areas, was also created piecemeal, a patchwork of expedients. Throughout, the historical origins of three Presidencies continued to affect the nature of the central authority. Up to 1773 each Presidency had been controlled by its own council of senior servants of the Company, a form of government better suited to a commercial concern than to a political authority. The Regulating Act of 1773 had provided for a central government, with a Governor-General in Council, but had denied to the Governor-General mastery of his Council in the administration of Bengal, and to Bengal any effective control of Madras and Bombay.<sup>3</sup> The latter weakness was systematically eradicated by the India Act of 1784 and the Charter Act of 1833. But an adequate internal administration for the Presidency and province of Bengal was not secured.<sup>4</sup>

The difficulty was that one and the same body was made responsible both for the local government of Bengal, and for the superintendence of the whole of the British possessions in India.<sup>5</sup> Warren Hastings, as early as 1773, drew attention to

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1. Baden-Powell, B.H., Land Systems of British India, Vol.I, pp.54-57, 72,73.
  2. In 1833 it was estimated that the population of Bengal was sixty-nine millions as against the thirteen millions of Madras and seven millions of Bombay.
  3. Strachey, J., India, Its Administration and Progress, p.47. Also see Misra, B.B., Central Structure of the East India Company, pp.18-21. Also see Calcutta Review, 1845, Vol.III, p.169.
  4. Ilbert, C.P., The Government of India, (3rd ed.), p.60. Also see Chesney, G., Indian Polity, pp.41-49.
  5. Court of Directors to Govt. of India - 10 Dec. 1834; as cited by Mukherji, P., in Indian Constitutional Documents, Vol.I, p.117.

the weakness. "The extent of Bengal", he told the Court of Directors, "and its possible resources, are equal to those of most states in Europe. Its difficulties are greater than those of any, because it wants both an established form and powers of government".<sup>1</sup> The government provided for it by the Act of 1773 was not adequate to its substance. What was needed was a separate government for Bengal, vigorous and efficient and capable of conducting the affairs of a province of enormous size. In 1800, Wellesley took up the question, calling for the "addition of a Lieutenant-Governor (from England) at each Presidency".<sup>2</sup> No such appointments were made, though his conquests subsequently extended Bengal's frontier to points some eleven hundred miles North-West, and one hundred and fifty miles South of Calcutta.<sup>3</sup> These additional territories naturally received less attention than Bengal proper from a government seated in Calcutta; in 1808 James Stuart,<sup>4</sup> urged that "a subordinate government is as necessary in the new territories (or North-Western parts of Hindoostan Proper) as at Madras and Bombay."<sup>5</sup> Nothing was done, however, so that Sir John Malcolm, Governor of Bombay, was to be found in 1826 again advocating the separation of the two functions of the Governor-General

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1. Hastings to the Court of Directors - 11 Nov. 1773; as cited by Muir, R., in The Making of British India, p.iii.
  2. Wellesley to Dundas - 25 Jan. 1800; as cited by Misra, op.cit., p.44.
  3. Holt Mackenzie's Minute - 20 July 1830; Papers relating to the Constitution of Indian Governments, Record Dept., (19) 1085, p.14, para.3. Mackenzie, Holt. Sec. to Govt. of Bengal in Territorial Dept., 1817-31. Privy Councillor and Commr. of Board of Control, 1832-4.
  4. Stuart, James. Appointed assistant, Govt. of Bengal in Revenue Dept., 1791. Served in the Sadr Diwani and Nizamat Adalat as assistant to the Registrar and as Deputy Registrar, 1793-95. Judge and Magistrate of Agra, 1804. Judge of the Court of Appeal and Circuit at Benares, 1807. Puisne Judge of the Court of Sadr Diwani and Nizamat Adalat, 1809.
  5. Stuart's report - 5 Feb. 1808; as cited by Bax in his minute of 21 Aug. 1830; Papers relating etc. op.cit., p.28, para.3.

and pointing out ~~to~~ the further advantage which would follow by  
 "withdrawing his high name from the minor acts which  
 must always agitate a community composed like that  
 of Calcutta". 1

In 1830, under the presidentship of Holt Mackenzie, the members  
 of the Calcutta Civil Finance Committee,<sup>2</sup> set up by Lord  
 Bentinck to co-ordinate economies in the three Presidencies,  
 commented that

"to the want of a Supreme Government, divested of  
 local charge, and disjoined from the Government of  
 a separate Presidency are to be attributed an im-  
 perfect control over the administration of the three  
 Presidencies, [and] to which the Supreme Government  
 has been attached". 3

They repeated the earlier proposals for a separation of the  
 functions of the Supreme Government from those of the local  
 administration of Bengal, and added a new one for separating  
 the North-Western Provinces, extending from Benares to Delhi  
 from Bengal and placing them under a separate administration.<sup>4</sup>  
 Mackenzie in proposing to divest the Supreme Government of the  
 local administration of a province was following the Benthamite  
 theory of a strong central government, authoritative in  
 character and effective in controlling and directing the sub-  
 ordinate governments.<sup>5</sup> On financial grounds, however, Bentinck  
 opposed a separate government for Bengal as well as the  
 separation of the North-Western Provinces which the Committee's  
 proposals involved. Instead he suggested the appointment of a  
 Vice-President to take charge of Bengal local government, and

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1. Malcolm, J., Political History of India, Vol.II, pp.134-8.  
 Hill also referred to Malcolm's suggestion in his minute  
 of 16 June 1830; Papers relating etc. op.cit., p.5, para.8.
  2. D. Hill, H. Mackenzie and J. Bax were the members.
  3. Civil Finance Committee to Gov-Gen. - 2 Aug. 1830; Papers  
 relating etc. op.cit., p.2, para.2.
  4. Ibid.
  5. Stokes, E., The English Utilitarians and India, pp.162,  
 168-73.

the transfer of the capital from Calcutta to Allahabad.<sup>1</sup>

The observations made by the Civil Finance Committee and others were taken into consideration by the Home Authorities while framing the Charter Act of 1833. To a certain extent the Act was a compromise between Bentinck's and Mackenzie's recommendations.<sup>2</sup> The Governor-General of Fort William in Bengal became the Governor-General of India in Council and "the superintendence, direction and control of the whole civil and military government" of the British territories was placed under his authority.<sup>3</sup> The Act of 1833 eased the situation only by separating the Upper Provinces from Bengal proper and forming them in 1836 into the North-Western Provinces under a Lieutenant-Governor. "A central government, ... entirely free from local responsibilities, was perhaps too visionary at this stage".<sup>4</sup> The Lower Provinces, unwieldy still, were denied any

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1. Bentinck's Minute - 14 Sept. 1831; Papers relating etc. op. cit., pp.56-7. Stokes suggests that Bentinck probably opposed the creation of a separate government for Bengal and the severance of the central government's connection with its administration as it might have diminished his authority. (See Stokes, op.cit., p.174). There is no evidence to support Stokes's contention. Bentinck opposed the plan as he thought that though the North-Western Provinces differed from Bengal in certain respects, yet there was a great mutual connection between their general interests through Calcutta, their chief port and centre of commercial transactions. Moreover, Bentinck opposed the separation of the North-Western Provinces because of the increased expense involved in providing a separate establishment for them. Bentinck's argument, based on financial stringencies, seems to be convincing in view of the fact that he was appointed Governor-General as a good financier and was called upon to enforce economies. Besides, the Civil Finance Committee had been set up to co-ordinate the finances of the various presidencies.

Bentinck proposed transferring the capital to Allahabad and not to Agra as remarked by Stokes. In 1829, Bentinck had only suggested moving the capital temporarily to the North-Western Provinces. Even then he did not mean to remove the entire Secretariat from Calcutta. See Stokes, op. cit., p.171, fn.1. Also see Bentinck's Minute of 10 Feb. 1829 and 22 Feb. 1830; Papers relating etc. op.cit., pp.80-3.

2. Stokes, op.cit., p.180.  
 3. 3 & 4. Will. IV, C.85, s.39.  
 4. Stokes, op.cit., p.174.

separate administration. They remained the charge of the overburdened Governor-General.<sup>1</sup> The fact that a Deputy Governor took over in the absence of the Governor-General<sup>2</sup> was little compensation, for the frequent changes in command made continuity of policy and action impossible. Between 1842 and 1850 no less than nine persons held charge of Bengal as Governors and Deputy Governors.<sup>3</sup> "It is no wonder", observed Sir George Campbell,<sup>4</sup> "that such a government is inefficient, that nothing has generally been done beyond mere routine, and that Bengal has suffered in consequence. The best man who could be selected, permanently appointed, and with no other duties, would have a hard task of it."<sup>5</sup>

The task of any governor of Bengal would certainly have been hard, for the strong infrastructure of district administration created in other provinces was lacking. As Sir H. Verney Lovett has pointed out, there was no district official in Bengal

"possessed, by virtue of his office, of pre-eminent power and responsibility. It was the duty, the inspiring duty, of no one servant of the Company to watch over and promote the general welfare, from every point of view, of the people committed to his charge. And as one legacy of the Permanent Settlement was the payment of all revenue into the district headquarters treasury, and another was the complete absence of any attempt to register either the tenure and the holdings of cultivators or any changes in the ownership of land, no Bengal collector enjoyed the assistance of tahsildars or

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1. 3 & 4. Will. IV. C.85. s.56.
  2. This had been provided for in 1793. See Misra, op.cit., p.40.
  3. Buckland, C.T., Bengal under the Lieutenant-Governors, Vol.I, p.xiii. Lord Curzon wrote that between 1837 and 1885 eight such appointments were made. See Curzon, British Government in India, Vol.II, p.74.
  4. Campbell, Sir George (1824-92). Held various civil appointments in North-Western Provinces, 1843-51 & 1854-7. Second Civil Commissioner, Oudh, 1857-62. Judge of Calcutta High Court and served on Bengal Famine Enquiry Commission, 1862-67. Chief Commr. Central Provinces. 1867-8, Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, 1871-4.
  5. Campbell, G., Modern India: A Sketch of the System of Civil Government, p.228.

of any subordinate revenue staff. All orders from headquarters to outlying parts of the district travelled through the corrupt and oppressive police."<sup>1</sup>

In 1853, therefore, Dalhousie, the Viceroy, returned to the attack, and in a minute of 6 December pressed upon the Home Government the need to give Bengal a separate executive machinery. He restated Mackenzie's contention, declaring that the general superintendence of the local governments ought to be the Governor-General's primary duty, and that consequently he "ought to be relieved altogether from the labour of administering the details of a local government", details, which "imposed upon the Governor-General a burden which, in its present mass is more than mortal man can fitly bear".<sup>2</sup>

The briefest review of the work of the Bengal government shows just how great a burden it had become. Annexations had created a province of the size of France, and with a larger population, and of the most heterogeneous nature.<sup>3</sup> The Government of Bengal was responsible both for the permanently settled areas, and for the Non-Regulation territories of Assam and the South-West Frontier Agency, both isolated and difficult regions with warlike tribes which were a constant source of worry. There were also the overseas territories, Tenasserim, Penang, Malacca and Singapore, whose increasing European trading settlements were a heavy responsibility. And as if that were not enough, the superintendence of native states was a Bengal responsibility, as was the immensely important mercantile charge of the salt and opium manufactures.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Cambridge History of India, Vol.VI, p.29.

2. Dalhousie's Minute - 6 Dec. 1853; as cited by Risley in his note of 6 Dec. 1904; N.R.P.B., C.C., Vol.247, p.38. Also see Dalhousie's Minute as cited by Grey in his minute of 13 March 1868; I.H.P.P., 1868, Range 434, Vol.10, Proc. 150 of March 1868. Also see Dalhousie's Minute - 28 Feb. 1858; Minute of Dalhousie Reviewing His Administration in India, Record Dept., 19 (17) 1856.

3. Ilbert, op.cit., p.93. Also see Frere's Minute of 2 Dec. 1867; Bengal Administration, P.P., 363.

4. Buckland, op.cit., pp.xii-iv.

When in 1852 Select Committees were appointed by the House of Commons to consider the working of the Government of India and the anomalous character of the Government of Bengal, they had little difficulty in deciding that the change was overdue.<sup>1</sup> By the Charter Act of 1853, therefore, provision was made for either a full Governor or a Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, and in 1854 Bengal was constituted a Lieutenant-Governor's province.<sup>2</sup>

It had been hoped that with a government of its own, strengthened by the creation of a Legislative Council and a High Court of Judicature in 1862, there would be a general improvement in the administration of Bengal. The impetus given to education and to road construction, and the rapid expansion of trade and industry were signs of progress. But the reorganisation was still inadequate to the burdens. The problem of tenant rights, serious disturbances in the indigo plantations in Bihar and elsewhere, the recruitment of tea-garden coolies, and rising of hill tribes between Assam and Bengal continued to overburden successive Lieutenant-Governors with work.<sup>3</sup> For that work, they had a very inadequate staff. In 1867, W. Grey, the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, pointed out that whereas Madras had a Governor, two members of Council, two Secretaries, two Under-Secretaries and a Public Works Secretariat, the Government of Bengal was run by a Lieutenant-Governor without a Council, aided by only one Secretary, two Under-Secretaries and a Public Works Secretariat, even though its business was "probably not far short of double the business" of the Madras Civil Secretariat.<sup>4</sup> Yet between 1846 and 1865 the revenues of Bengal had increased from seven to fifteen million of rupees, its sea-borne trade thirteen fold,<sup>5</sup> while the 18,144 official letters handled in 1844 had grown to 62,878 in 1867.<sup>6</sup>

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1. Chesney, *op.cit.*, pp.65-6. Also see Charles Wood's speech - 3 June 1853; 124, H.C. Debs., 3s, cols.159-61.

2. Stokes, *op.cit.*, pp.255-6. For reasons of economy and because of the location of the capital at Calcutta, Bengal was not given a Governor.

3. Buckland, *op.cit.*, pp.xii-iv.

4. Grey to Lawrence - 6 July 1867; J.L.P., Vol.49.

5. Frere's Memo. - 2 Dec. 1867; P.P., 363, No.8.

6. Grey's Minute - 13 March 1868; *Ibid.*

If the central administration of Bengal was undermanned and overtaxed, so was the district administration. The structural weaknesses<sup>1</sup>, already commented upon, were glaringly revealed by the Orissa famine of 1865-66, which affected an area of some twelve thousand square miles and some four million people.<sup>1</sup> In parts of the province there was starvation or acute distress; numbers of children were sold as slaves;<sup>2</sup> but the officials, unaware of the gravity of the situation, failed to provide timely and vigorous relief. So while "the yell for food" sounded across the countryside, and perhaps one fifth of the population perished, local officials, inadequately informed, sent contradictory reports to headquarters.<sup>3</sup> Their correspondence lengthened, and the number of files in the Secretariat multiplied, but still Sir Cecil Beadon, the Lieutenant-Governor, failed to realise that the distress was real and widespread. As a result, the presence in one city of the seats of the Provincial and the Supreme Governments, which should have ensured swift communication and speedy action, failed to give strength to the administration. The Supreme Government, lacking clear and reliable information was handicapped in its appraisal of the extent of the calamity, relief was tardy and inadequate, statistical enquiries yielded only the number of the dead.<sup>4</sup>

The weakness revealed by the famine formed the subject of a lengthy correspondence between the Governor-General and the Secretary of State. John Lawrence, the Viceroy, laid much of the blame upon the lack of direct contact between officials and people under the Permanent Settlement. "The ordinary course", he said, had been "to leave the people alone, and allow things to go on pretty much as they might do".<sup>5</sup> In

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1. Buckland, op.cit., p.329.

2. Lawrence to Northcote - 17 June 1867; J.L.P., Vol.32.

3. Bengal and Orissa Famine Report, 1866, Vol.1, p.20, para.69. & p. 127, para.408.

4. Buckland, op.cit., pp.329-94.

5. Lawrence to Northcote - 17 June 1867; J.L.P., Vol.32.



Bengal, he argued, the executive was ineffective. It reigned but did not govern. The system of administration was highly legalised and "there was a great deal more of law in its composition than anything else". An awareness of their legal rights took the people to the courts rather than to the administrators of the country.<sup>1</sup> The result was that the executive was reluctant to perform actions the legality of which could be challenged in the courts, while the litigious spirit of the people tied the officials to the court rooms.<sup>2</sup> The work of the district officers was thus uncreative; it was also heavy, for the Bengal districts were twice as large as those of the North-Western Provinces, and three times those of the Punjab.<sup>3</sup>

Lawrence brought his administrative experience in the Punjab to bear upon the problems facing the Bengal administration. He had been used to a system, militant in character and effectively sustained through the personal initiative of the executive authority. He attributed the weakness of administrative machinery to the absence of personal and paternal rule of the district officer.<sup>4</sup> As pointed out by J.D. Gordon, Lawrence's Private Secretary, little attention was paid to the local affairs of Bengal: "the top most boughs of the tree" had been "cared for and tended but the lower branches and roots, in which mainly the health of the tree lies" had been neglected.<sup>5</sup>

The Commission of Enquiry<sup>6</sup> appointed to seek the causes of the Orissa catastrophe reported on 6 April 1867. They confirmed Lawrence's diagnosis, placing much of the blame for the disaster upon "the peculiarities of the administration

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1. Ibid.

2. Buckland, op.cit., p.356. Also see Stokes, op.cit., pp.145-6.

3. Lawrence to Northcote - 30 July 1867; J.L.P., Vol.32.

4. Stokes, op.cit., pp.245-6 & 268-9.

5. Gordon's Memo. - 30 July 1867; P.P., 363, Encl. 4 in No.1.

6. George Campbell, W.E. Morton and G.L. Dampier were its members.

in the Lower Provinces of the Bengal Presidency".<sup>1</sup> Northcote, the Secretary of State, impressed by the Commission's arguments, decided thereupon to review all the administrative arrangements in the province.<sup>2</sup> A Special Committee<sup>3</sup> was appointed by him in England and the Government of India was invited to offer their suggestions for improvements in the existing system.

Northcote himself believed in decentralising the administration so that by giving ample freedom to local governments their initiative and drive could be maintained. Because of the presence of the Supreme Government in Bengal, the Bengal administration had assumed a kind of Imperial character. It was not independent; it had to look to the central authority for guidance and advice. "If Calcutta is to be the capital of India", observed Northcote, "you cannot have a really independent Govt. of Bengal." He therefore favoured the removal of the capital from Calcutta and giving Bengal "a thoroughly well organized Government of its own".<sup>4</sup>

The Committee's Report of 14 November 1867, recommended the retention of Bengal as a Lieutenant-Governor's province without a Legislative Council and of Calcutta as the metropolis of India. It suggested, however, that Calcutta might be placed under the charge of a member of the Governor-General's Council or that an additional member might be appointed for its administration. The Committee also recommended the constitution of Assam as a Chief Commissioner's province.<sup>5</sup>

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1. Bengal and Orissa Famine Report, 1866, Vol.I, p.127. For detailed correspondence on famine, see P.L., 1866, Vol.10, 1867, Vol.11; P.D., 1866, Vol.9, 1867, Vol.10, & Collection to Despatches, 1866, Vols. 40, 41, 1867, Vols. 42-5.
  2. Northcote to Lawrence - 15 May & 3 Aug. 1867; J.L.P., Vol.28.
  3. F. Currie, E. Perry, R.D. Mangles and H.C. Montgomery were the members.
  4. Northcote to Lawrence - 15 Aug. 1867; J.L.P., Vol.28.
  5. Report of the Special Committee - 14 Nov. 1867; P.P., 363. Also see Northcote to Lawrence - 9 Oct. 1867; J.L.P., Vol.28.

In Northcote's opinion, the recommendations of the Committee did not go far enough. He thought that the Committee had laid undue stress on the question of the change of the capital, treating it as primary, whereas he regarded it as of secondary importance. The main issue was the need to strengthen the Bengal administration which he thought could only be achieved by a change in the form of its government. If the pattern of a Governor and Council were suited to Madras and Bombay, observed Northcote, it would be equally good for Bengal; and "if it be good for Bengal, I think we ought not to refuse it to her".<sup>1</sup> Northcote did not want to impose his ideas. Had he done so, he might well have carried the Committee with him, but since, Lawrence was opposed to the idea, he decided to invite the opinion of the Government of India.<sup>2</sup>

Accordingly the Government of India was asked to express its views on a number of alternative plans: whether to raise Bengal to a Governor's province without changing the capital or maintain the existing form of government, or to place Bengal under the Governor-General or to revert to the arrangement which existed before 1854, *viz.*, administer Bengal through a Deputy Governor and abolish its Legislative Council. The Government was also asked whether Assam, Burma, Sind and Orissa should be under the Government of India or local governments.<sup>3</sup>

As a champion of the paternal system of government, Lawrence believed that the government of a province was best run by a Lieutenant-Governor without<sup>an</sup> executive council - a plan which would secure "momentum of improvement, the exaction of responsibility, the exercise of vigilance, in the highest degree obtainable". He therefore opposed Bengal's constitution as a Governor's province. Lawrence was even ready to abolish

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1. Northcote to Currie - 14 Nov. 1867; P.P., 363, No.7.
  2. Northcote to Lawrence - 18 Dec. 1867; J.L.P., Vol.28.
  3. Sec. of State to Gov-Gen. - 16 Jan. 1868; P.D., 1868, Vol.11, paras. 10-20.

the Bengal Legislature and to grant powers of summary legislation to the Lieutenant-Governor instead. Under a Governor's rule, a Council could offer serious impediments at any stage of proceedings.<sup>1</sup> "In this country", Lawrence had earlier observed, "an element of despotism is valuable, as giving unity, force and consistence to the governing power, and this will scarcely even be found in the Govt. of a Govr. and Council".<sup>2</sup> Moreover, such a change would have weakened the Imperial Government and would have been "destructive of all real authority in the Govt. of India".<sup>3</sup> As Stokes has pointed out, the issue "touched his own position as Viceroy. If Bengal were placed under a Governor and Council ... and if this were later to be repeated in the other presidencies, it implied a devolution of authority from the centre" for the Viceroy's authority over a Lieutenant-Governor was much greater than over the Governors.<sup>4</sup> Lawrence was also of the view that since Madras and Bombay were distinctly situated from the headquarters of the Government of India, they could not be under its direct supervision, whereas Bengal was under the eye of the central government.<sup>5</sup> He would not retreat from his previous stand of retaining Calcutta as the capital. Earlier he had written that either Amballa or Rawalpindi were by their situation better suited than Calcutta to be the seat of government. But, with the Mutiny in mind, he had rejected them, set as they were among "warlike races", in favour of Calcutta and its "feeble and timid" Bengalis accustomed from time immemorial to foreign

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1. Lawrence's Memo. - 20 Jan. 1868; I.H.P.P., 1868, Range 434, Vol.10, Proc. 151 of 28 March 1868. Also see Lawrence's Minute - 19 Feb. 1868; Collection to Despatches, Vol.62. Also see Stokes, op.cit., pp.270-1.
  2. Lawrence to Northcote - 30 July 1867; J.L.P., Vol.32.
  3. Lawrence to Northcote - 22 Jan. 1868; Ibid., Vol.33.
  4. Stokes, op.cit., p.271.
  5. Lawrence's Memo. - 20 Jan. 1868; op.cit.

rule.<sup>1</sup> Besides, he was of the view that moving the capital would "tear the heart out of the body politic" since Calcutta was the "political capital, the commercial emporium, the natural seaport of Bengal".<sup>2</sup> Finally he recommended that Assam and the adjoining districts should be placed under a Chief Commissioner. He suggested that if the separation of Assam was not enough to reduce the burdens of Bengal, Bihar with parts of Benares might be constituted as a separate Lieutenant-Governorship.<sup>3</sup>

The Government of India's officials were not unanimous in their recommendations. Some had recommended the raising of Bengal to a Governor's province with a Council; others favoured its retention as a Lieutenant-Governorship; some had suggested the constitution of Assam as a Chief Commissionership; others argued that Bihar should be severed from Bengal.<sup>4</sup> The discussion

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1. Lawrence to Wood & Lawrence to Northcote - 8 Nov. 1866, & 19 Jan. 1867; J.L.P., Vol.32.
  2. Lawrence's Memo. 20 Jan. 1868; op.cit.
  3. Lawrence's Minute - 23 March 1868; I.H.P.P., 1868, Range 434, Vol.10, Proc. 160 of 28 March.
  4. W.R. Mansfield (C.-in-C.), W.Grey (Lieutenant-Governor, Bengal), G.N. Taylor & H.S. Maine (Members, Viceroy's Council) recommended a Governor and Council for Bengal. Mansfield, Maine and Grey opposed the separation of Assam; Taylor suggested its constitution as a Chief Commissioner's province if Bengal was to remain a Lieutenant-Governorship. He also suggested the separation of Bihar. See Mansfield's Minute of 24 Feb. 1868; Encl. 2 in No.11; Taylor's Minute of 27 Feb. 1868; Encl. 6 in No.11; Maine's Minute of 16 March 1868; Encl. 8 in No.11, & Grey's Minute of 16 March 1868; P.P., 363. W. Muir (Sec. Govt. of India, For. Dept.), recommended a Governor or a Lieutenant-Governor but without a Council and the conversion of Assam into a Chief Commissionership; H.M. Durand (Member, Viceroy's Council), was not only in favour of retaining Bengal as a Lieutenant-Governor's province but proposed to convert Madras and Bombay on the same lines. He also opposed the separation of Assam; W.N. Massey (Member, Viceroy's Council), favoured the retention of Bengal as a Lieutenant-Governorship. See Muir's Minute of 25 Feb. 1868; Encl. 3 in No.11; Durand's Minute of 27 Feb. 1868; Encl. 4 in No.11; & Massey's Minute of 3 March 1868; Encl. 7 in No.11; Ibid., Bartle Frere (Member, Sec. of State's Council) and a strong opponent of Lieutenant-Governor's rule thought that such a government was only a temporary expedient for a newly conquered tract. It could not be

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led to no action though "it had revealed the cleavage between the legalists and the paternalists".<sup>1</sup> Lawrence, therefore, decided to send to the Secretary of State the various minutes on the subject without any final and collective recommendations from the Government of India.<sup>2</sup>

If the Secretary of State had decided to impose his original views of raising Bengal to a Governor's province, Lawrence would have carried them out.<sup>3</sup> Northcote's own attitude was rather vacillating. He did not find support from his Committee; he found the Government of India divided and the Governor-General decidedly opposed though "prepared to carry it out in a proper spirit, should this be the change finally determined on". The net result of the discussion was the decision to leave Bengal a Lieutenant-Governorship and to strengthen its Secretariat.<sup>4</sup>

Lawrence's suggestion that Assam and the outlying areas of East Bengal be formed into a Chief Commissionership was not at once acted upon. It was only when the problem of defence on the eastern frontier forced itself upon Lawrence's successor Mayo that the latter decided to move. The whole frontier population, from the Daflas and Mishmis of north Assam, through the Singhphos, Lushais and Nagas to the Maghs of the Chittagong Hill Tracts, was prone to burst out in raids upon the settled districts of the plains. "These savages must be taught", wrote Mayo to Argyle the Secretary of State, "that they cannot attack British territory & murder our subjects, with impunity".<sup>5</sup>

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fn. 4 continued from previous page.

imposed as a permanent form of government over a civilised and settled area. "Perpetual infancy" he wrote, "of civil government is just as impossible as perpetual reconquest". See Frere's Memo. 2 Dec. 1867; Ibid., No.8.

1. Stokes, op.cit., p.272.

2. Gov.-Gen. to Sec. of State - 28 March 1868; P.L., 1868, Vol.12, L. No.50.

3. Lawrence to Northcote - 30 July 1867, J.L.P., Vol.32.

4. Lawrence to Northcote - 22 Jan. 1868; Ibid., Vol.33.

5. Mayo to Argyle - 1 Feb. 1869; Mayo Papers, Vol.34.

At the same time Mayo thought that the eastern districts would greatly gain by the erection of a separate government. "The Bengal system of Govt", he wrote to Frere on 17 April 1869, "cannot be suited to a wild and half settled country and I believe there is no district in India where an active and energetic man at the head of a Local Government could do more good than in our somewhat neglected S.E. Provinces".<sup>1</sup>

The outbreak from 1870 onwards of a series of organised and extensive Lushai raids, brought matters to a head.<sup>2</sup> The absence of road and rail communications, the wildness of the country, and an unfavourable climate made effective operations against the tribes difficult. Assam as a whole was "practically out of the superintending power of Bengal", and the problem was made the more intractable by there being "one policy in Arracan, another in Chittagong and still another in Cachar and the Naga Hills".<sup>3</sup> The solution to the problem was a transfer of the whole frontier to the care of a single administration. In April 1871, the proposal was made by the Government of India to create a Chief Commissionership of Assam responsible for Cooch Behar, Division including Jalpaiguri, the Duars, and Darjeeling; for the Assam Division, including the Khasi and Naga Hills; for the Garo Hills, and the Sylhet Division consisting of Sylhet and Cachar.<sup>4</sup> To this proposal the Secretary of State gave his general assent in August 1871.<sup>5</sup>

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1. Mayo to Frere - 17 April 1869; Ibid., Vol.35.
  2. Mackenzie, A., History of the relations of the Government with the hill tribes of the North-East Frontier of Bengal, pp.301-14. Also see Mayo to Argyle - 1 & 8 Feb., 1871; Mayo Papers, Vol.42, & Mayo to Argyle - 21 July 1871; Ibid., Vol.44; & Mayo to Campbell - 22 Oct. 1871; Ibid., Vol.45.
  3. Gov-Gen. - to Sec. of State - 4 April 1871; Secret Letters & Enclosures from India & Madras, 1871, Vol.8, L.No.17.
  4. Ibid., para.9. Also see notes on the establishment of the Chief Commissionership for Assam and the North-East Frontier, Mayo Papers, Vol.15, part II.
  5. Sec. of State to Gov.-Gen. - 15 Aug. 1871; Pol. Despatches to India, 1871, Vol.14, L.No.101, para.11.

With the death of Mayo in 1872, Lord Northbrook who took office as Viceroy in the same year, instituted a review of the whole question of provincial boundaries,<sup>1</sup> in the main as part of the wider question of frontier defence and control. In the West the problem was to co-ordinate the frontier policies of the Sind and Punjab administrations. The question of the transfer of Sind from Bombay to the Punjab, first mooted by Dalhousie, and re-examined in 1868, was therefore taken up by Northbrook.<sup>2</sup> The plan foundered, partly on the question of cost, but more because of the opposition of the Bombay Presidency. The Bombay Government was not prepared to lose Sind unless compensated by the transfer of the Marathi-speaking areas from the Central Provinces and to any such grouping of the Marathas Northbrook was opposed on political grounds.<sup>3</sup>

In the East, Bengal's problems were re-examined as a by-product of a review of the North-East Frontier undertaken by Mayo. Once the question of altering the Bengal boundaries had been raised, the way was open to consider whether an even more extensive relief to the administrative burdens of the province might not be secured. The inadequacy of the administration's knowledge of Bengal, and the vastness of the province were alike brought out by the census of 1872. Pabna, believed on the basis of Board of Revenue returns to have a population of 337,679 people, was found to have 1,218,738,<sup>4</sup> while the census showed that the Lieutenant-Governor was responsible for a total population of nearly sixty-seven million people. Sir George Campbell, the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, pressed for a much greater relief to his government than would be

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1. Northbrook to Woodhouse - 18 June 1872; Northbrook to Muir - 10 Sept. 1872; Northbrook to Campbell - 12 Sept. 1872, & Northbrook to Temple - 12 Oct. 1872; Northbrook Papers, Vol.13.

2. Hewett's Note - 28 Aug. 1902; N.T.C.I., C.C., Vol.247, para.3.

3. Ibbetson's Note - 28 Feb. 1903; Ibid., para.15.

4. Govt. of Bengal to Govt. of India - 8 June 1872; I.H.P.P., 1873, Vol.514, Proc. 511 for May, L No.2445, para.10.



afforded by the separation of Assam.<sup>1</sup> In September, 1872 he wrote to Northbrook, asking, "whether if Bengal is to be dismembered at all, instead of making 65 and 2, you had not better take out at once the 20 millions of Behar -- all Hindustanees allied with North-Western Provinces."<sup>2</sup> By June 1873, after considering the "extent and variety of territories, people and departments, and of weighty and difficult subjects" involved, he showed himself readier to accept the Assam scheme, but he continued to press for substantial relief.<sup>3</sup> The Government of India, therefore, reviewed the scheme to see if the Chittagong Division could not also be included in the proposed Assam Chief Commissionership.

In the end the problem of communications<sup>4</sup> between Assam and Chittagong led to the abandonment of the idea, in favour of the original proposals of 1871.<sup>5</sup> But before these

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1. Govt. of Bengal to Govt. of India - 9 Jan. 1873; Ibid., Proc. 205 for April 1873, L. No.105, para.5. Campbell wrote that the territories under the Bengal Government "are more than one man can properly govern unaided" and that "justice has never been done to them". Also see Campbell's Minute - 27 Jan. 1873; Encl. in Govt. of Bengal to Govt. of India of 12 Feb. 1873; Ibid.
  2. Campbell to Northbrook - 18 Sept. 1872; Northbrook Papers, Vol.13.
  3. Govt. of Bengal to Govt. of India - 17 June 1873; I.H.P.P., 1873, Vol.515, Proc. 520 for Oct., L.No.631 T, paras. 3-4.
  4. The first railway line from Calcutta towards Assam was opened in 1862 connecting Calcutta to Poradaha. In 1864, it was extended to Goalundo. It was not until 1879 that Calcutta was connected with Kuania through the Eastern Bengal Railway. But Upper Assam remained untraversed by railway and the journey on to Dibrugarh either from Goalundo or from Kaunia took approximately a fortnight. By 1885, the only railways in the Assam Valley were the Dibru-Saidya Railway and the Jorhat Provincial Railway, both at the eastern end of the Valley connecting the tea gardens with the Brahmaputra. The river services were the only means of communication with the outside world. It was not until 1904 that through communication between Chittagong and Dibrugarh was established. See The Story of the Assam Railways and Trading Company, 1881-1951, p.6.
  5. Gov-Gen. to Sec. of State - 23 Oct. 1873; I.H.P.P., Vol.515, Proc. 533 for Oct., L.No.73, paras.2-3. Also see Govt. of India to Govt. of Bengal - 30 July 1873; Ibid., Proc. 521 for Oct., L. No.2494, paras.2-4. In 1871, Mayo also thought that it was impossible to separate Chittagong from Bengal. See Mayo to Strachey - 3 Feb. 1871; Mayo Papers, Vol.42.

could be implemented they had to run the gauntlet of public comment. News of the proposals was revealed in the Bengal press in August 1873, even before the Secretary of State's final sanction had been accorded.<sup>1</sup> The Times of India also reported that the Lieutenant-Governor, Campbell, preferred the transfer of Bihar to the North-Western Provinces to the creation of a separate Assam.<sup>2</sup> The whole question of Bengal's frontiers therefore came up for discussion.

In general the newspapers commended the proposal for the separation of Assam, which according to them had as its object the development of tea planting, the improvement of land settlement questions and the better control of frontier affairs. These newspapers agreed that Assam and the Eastern districts of Bengal had been neglected by the administration. Writing on 4 September 1873, about Mymensingh, The Friend of India observed that it was a district "where there is prosperity but little enlightenment, peace but much litigation, security for all rights but a plainly pronounced determination ... to keep the landlord in his proper place" and that the people were backward, because their money had not been used for the development of the area, leaving it "fifty years behind the districts around Calcutta".

On the other hand, the proposed separation of Sylhet received severe public criticism. A memorial submitted by Abdul Kadir, Secretary of the People's Association of Sylhet, and signed by 2,130 residents, described the transfer of the district as a "death blow" to the "privileges and future prospects" of its inhabitants. The signatories claimed that historically Sylhet had always been connected with Bengal. They could find almost nothing in common between Assam and

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1. The Friend of India (Weekly - Serampore) - 7 & 28 Aug. 1873; The Englishman (Calcutta) - 8 Aug. 1873; & the Times of India (Bombay) - 12 Sept. 1873.
  2. The Times of India - 28 & 29 Aug. 1873; the Pioneer (Allahabad) - 12 Aug. 1873; & the Friend of India - 14 Aug. 1873. Also see Sir George Campbell's Administration, Tract 505.

Sylhet. Sylhet was governed by permanent tenures, whereas Assam was a newly acquired territory, and if this move took place they would lose the Board of Revenue and the highly-prized jurisdiction of the Calcutta High Court, and would be subjected to the rule of officers taken from the Military Services and accustomed to administer Non-Regulation areas. They pointed out that communications between Sylhet and Assam were undeveloped; they would have to cross country "infested with tigers and other ferocious beasts", not by train or steam-boat, but by "the ridiculous Khasiah Thaba" (boat), and the educational and commercial ties with Calcutta were bound to suffer. They stressed their contempt for the people of Assam by declaring that the Bengalis and Assamese were

"two different nations, and the pride of the people of Sylhet as belonging to the former nation will certainly be humbled to the dust with their loss of all connexion with the Government of Bengal; there can be nothing less pleasant, nothing more degrading and mortifying to them, than to lose their very national name, so dear to them. As an European will not like to be called an Asiatic or an African, so will it not be liked by a Bengalee to be called an Assamese, or a homeless and almost lawless barbarian of the hills." 1

Northbrook was convinced that the fears of Sylhet were unfounded<sup>2</sup> whereupon the Secretary of State decided that Sylhet should be included in Assam.<sup>3</sup> Northbrook however, consented to receive a deputation of those opposed to the change, but "when the time arrived, no deputation appeared".<sup>4</sup> In September 1874,

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1. Memorial from the people of Sylhet to Govt. of Bengal - 24 Aug. 1873; I.H.P.P., 1873; Vol.515, Proc. 532 for Oct., paras. 5-15. Another memorial was submitted by the Zamindars of Sylhet on the same lines. See Memorial from Grish Chunder Roy and others to Viceroy - 10 Aug. 1874; Ibid., 1874, Vol.516, Procs., 258-9 for Sept.
  2. Gov-Gen. to Sec. of State - 27 Jan. 1874; (Telegram), Ibid., Proc. 163 for Feb.
  3. Sec. of State to Gov-Gen. - 4 June 1874; (Telegram), Ibid., Proc. 222 for Sept.
  4. Northbrook to Salisbury - 11 & 31 Aug. 1874; Northbrook Papers, Vol.9. Also see Salisbury to Northbrook - 30 Sept. 1874; Ibid.

Sylhet became a part of the new Chief Commissionership of Assam.<sup>1</sup>

With this relief Bengal had to be content for many years until in 1892 a recurrence of Lushai raids reopened the question of boundary readjustments. Divided responsibility between the Governments of Assam, Chittagong and Burma for the administration of the border regions had led to confusion.<sup>2</sup> In order to adjust this divided control and formulate a uniform policy for the tribes, Lord Lansdowne, the Governor-General, called the Chin-Lushai Conference in January, 1892.

Lansdowne thought that it would be a good solution to place all the tribes under a single authority.<sup>3</sup> With this purpose of strengthening the frontier, the Conference recommended that the North and South Lushai Hills and parts of the Arakan Hill Tracts should be transferred to Assam. That proposal, in turn suggested the further transfer to Assam of the Chittagong Division. In July 1892, the Governor-General in Council decided both to place the South Lushai Tracts under Assam and to transfer the Chittagong district, after the completion of the settlement operations then going on in the district. If it was found that this would involve much delay, the Chittagong Hill Tracts were to be transferred in advance. Meanwhile the Bengal and Assam Governments were asked to submit proposals about the transfer of the whole of the Chittagong Division including the political charge of Tippera Hill State.<sup>4</sup>

For a year any further consideration of the transfer of the Chittagong Division was postponed on account of the settlement operations then under way. But in September 1893,

1. Govt. of India's Proclamation No.2343 - 12 Sept. 1874; I.H.P.P., 1873, Vol.516, Proc. 231. In Jan. 1874, the Sec. of State had already sanctioned the establishment of the Chief Commissionership.

2. Buckland, op.cit., Vol.II, pp.840-1.

3. Lansdowne to Cross - 6 & 19 Jan. 1892; Cross Collection, Vol.32.

4. Extract from the Procs., of the Govt. of India - 25 July 1892; I.H.P.P., 1892, Vol.4108, Proc. 149 for Oct.

Charles Elliot, the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, sought to get things moving again. He urged that the transfer should not be entirely postponed, and that the Chief Commissioner of Assam ought to "negotiate for or begin taking over" the Chittagong Hill Tracts, the Noakhali and Tippera districts with the charge of Tippera Hill State, "leaving the Chittagong district to remain under the Bengal Government till the settlement is concluded".<sup>1</sup> But by that date, affairs in the Chin-Lushai country had improved, and with the tribes under control, there was no longer any sense of urgency.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, because of transport and communication difficulties<sup>3</sup> the immediate transfer of the Northern and Southern Hills to Assam appeared to be difficult. It was therefore decided that the matter should remain in abeyance for one or two years "when it could be revived in connection with the transfer to Assam of the whole Chittagong Division".<sup>4</sup> The Secretary of State, concurring in the decision of the Government of India hoped that the issue was only postponed and would not be altogether lost sight of.<sup>5</sup>

As in 1873, rumours of proposals for a transfer of Bengal territory soon led to press comment. On 9 April 1892,

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1. Govt. of Bengal to Chief Commr. Assam - 2 Sept. 1893; India For. Procs. (External), Vol.4611, L.No.9 P-D.
  2. Cotton, Chief Sec. Govt. of Bengal to Govt. of India - (For. Dept.,) - 10 March 1894; Ibid., Proc. 327 for May, L. No. 951-P.
  3. How difficult were the communications in Assam would appear from the fact that in 1895, it took Ward, the Chief Commr. Assam, about two weeks to traverse a distance of about 230 miles through the hills from Cachar to Manipur and then to Kohima, the headquarters of the Naga Hill District and thence down to the plains of the Assam Valley. From Cachar to Manipur, he had to pass over seven ranges of hills rising to four thousand or five thousand feet. "The distance" remarked Ward, "had to be walked, or slowly ridden". See Ward to Elgin - 19 March 1895; Elgin Papers, Vol.66.
  4. Gov-Gen. to Sec. of State - 25 April 1894; Letters from India, (Pol. and Secret Dept.), 1894, Vol.74, No.66, paras.2-3.
  5. Sec. of State to Gov-Gen. - 31 May 1894; Pol. Despatches to India, 1894, Vol.20, No.4.

the Sanjivani raised the old cry against amalgamation with a non-regulation province, and the danger of transferred districts being "left behind Bengal in education and progress" and urged East Bengalis to set up an agitation.<sup>1</sup> The cry was taken up by the Dacca Gazette both in 1892 and again in 1895, when, denouncing Assam as a land of savages, it argued that the transfer would entail "the social and spiritual degradation of the people of Chittagong".<sup>2</sup>

Newspaper and public comment intensified from January 1896, when, with the approaching completion of the Chittagong settlement operations, the Government of India reopened the question of a transfer by calling for the views of the Bengal and Assam Governments.<sup>3</sup> The Anglo-Indian press which had previously commended the separation of Assam, now found the educated classes of the area opposed to the proposed transfer of the Chittagong Division. The papers admitted that Bengal was too heterogeneous a charge but sympathised with the grievance of the Chittagong public about the loss of their representation on the Bengal Council. They pressed for a fuller discussion of the problem.<sup>4</sup> The Englishman hoped that the public would be reconciled to the transfer if a Council was provided for as had been suggested by the Indian Association.<sup>5</sup> The Pioneer Mail made different suggestions -- Assam needed expansion in order to have "a separate, a prosperous, and a progressive existence". The addition of Chittagong Division would not enlarge its territories substantially and it would be best not merely to transfer that Division but also so much of East Bengal as lay east of the Padma and the Brahmaputra

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1. The Sanjivani (Calcutta) - 9 April 1892; B.N.N.R., No.16; Also see the Sanjivani of 29 Aug. 1892; Ibid., No.36.
  2. The Dacca Gazette (Dacca) - 18 April 1892; Ibid., No.17. Also see the Dacca Gazette of 18 March 1895; Ibid., No.12.
  3. Govt. of India to Govt. of Bengal/ Chief Commr. Assam - 18 Jan. 1896; I.H.P.P., 1896, Vol.4958, Proc. 175 for March, L. Nos. 85-86.
  4. The Friend of India & Statesman (Weekly, Calcutta) - 8 Jan., & 26 Feb. 1896. Also see the Pioneer Mail (Allahabad) - 27 Feb. 1896.
  5. The Englishman - 11 March 1896.

rivers. Like its other contemporaries the Pioneer Mail was concerned about the question of the right of representation and thought that once legislative progress had been granted to Bengal, it could not be taken away from the areas to be transferred and could hardly be denied to similar districts of Assam. Besides, the separation of Chittagong Division would not bring enough relief to Bengal and the paper therefore proposed to lop off the heterogeneous tracts of Orissa and the Chota Nagpur Divisions or Bihar instead. "If we English were a logical people", the paper wrote, "and impatient of anomalies, the relief of the overworked Government of Bengal would lie irresistibly in the separation of Bihar".<sup>1</sup> The Friend of India contended that Bengal was too extensive and diverse a charge to be conveniently governed by a single man and that if it was necessary to reduce the burden of Bengal Government, the best way was to erect a separate administration consisting of Assam, Chittagong Division, and the Dacca and Mymensingh districts.<sup>2</sup>

Like the Anglo-Indian press, the native newspapers of Bengal were not unanimous in their approach. In general the papers, both from West as well as East Bengal, deprecated the proposal and the relegation of the permanently settled districts to the status of non-regulation tracts under the Assam administration. They raised an outcry against the apprehended loss of the privilege of electing a member to the Legislative Council which the Chittagong Division then enjoyed. They also pointed out the material disadvantages accruing from the change. In particular, the Calcutta papers stressed the differences existing between the advanced Bengalis and the backward Assamese in regard to the language, culture and the civilisation of the two peoples. To the Sahachar the amalgamation was so derogatory that it stated that in the event of the transfer of the Chittagong Division, the educated men of the area would be

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1. The Pioneer Mail - 19 March & 9 April 1896.

2. The Friend of India & Statesman, 26 May 1896.

forced to leave Chittagong and migrate to the Dacca Division.<sup>1</sup> The Hitavadi raised an outcry against joining the culturally advanced people of Chittagong with "savage people like the Lushais and Kukis".<sup>2</sup>

Some of the objections raised by the Bengali press were reasonable enough to have won the support of their Anglo-Indian contemporaries but the stand taken by the native West Bengal papers also betrayed their apprehension about the diminution of Calcutta's role in the politics of Bengal if its extensive territories were to be curtailed. Perhaps for this reason, the newspapers suggested the amalgamation of Assam with Bengal and asked the Government to raise Bengal to a Governor's province.<sup>3</sup> But their reasoning was inconsistent, for if the objection against joining the Bengalis with the Assamese was true on cultural grounds, it also held good when the papers proposed to amalgamate the backward Assamese with the advanced Bengalis.

As against the West Bengal press, certain newspapers of East Bengal saw some good in the proposal of the government. The Dacca Prakash remarked that East Bengal had not been given fair treatment in the past and the paper advocated the formation of a new province for the area. It pointed out the unequal attention which the eastern districts had received and wrote that the Cachar Local Board had spent more money in one year on the improvement of roads and other works than the Dacca District Board had done for a population nearly eight times as large. The paper was not only in favour of the transfer of the Chittagong Division but urged the transfer of the whole Dacca Division so that the new province would be large enough to claim a Legislative Assembly. The paper hoped that in the proposed province, the people would no longer have to put up

1. The Sahachar (Calcutta) - 1 Jan. 1896; B.N.N.R., No.2.

2. The Hitavadi (Calcutta) - 3 Jan., & 6 Feb. 1896; Ibid. Nos. 2 & 7 respectively.

3. The Bengalee (Calcutta) - 4 Jan. 1896. Also see the Burdwan Sanjivani (Burdwan) - 7 Jan. 1896; B.N.N.R., No.2.



with the "oppression and injustice" they suffered at the hands of the West Bengalis who "though inferior to them in point of merit and ability" had excluded the East Bengalis from "the loaves and fishes of the Government".<sup>1</sup> But like the West Bengal papers, the Dacca Prakash also gave vent to the prejudices against the people of Assam by suggesting that the new province be called the East Bengal Government so as not to brand the population of Bengal with the name of Assamese. The paper urged the people of East Bengal to agitate for a new province.<sup>2</sup>

If the East Bengal papers had shown regional tendencies by suggesting the formation of a larger province as one of the alternatives, the same was true of the papers published in Urdu and Hindi representing the interests of the non-Bengali-speaking areas such as Bihar. The newspapers demanded the separation of Bihar.<sup>3</sup> Like the East Bengal press, these papers pointed out that the people of Bihar, who differed from the Bengalis in language and customs, had suffered at the hands of the Bengalis who dominated them in education and in the services.<sup>4</sup> While the agitation for a separate Bihar was on foot, the West Bengal press opposed it (as they had opposed the loss of any territories to Assam) by pointing out that if the demand for a separate Bihar were granted, similar demands would be made by other areas of Bengal like Orissa and Chota Nagpur.<sup>5</sup>

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1. The Dacca Prakash (Dacca) - 12 Jan. 1896; Ibid., No.3.
  2. Ibid., - 23 Feb. 1896; No.9. Also see the Dacca Gazette - 13 & 20 Jan. 1896; Ibid., Nos. 3 & 5 respectively. The Sanjivani thought that if it was necessary to transfer Chittagong Division, the new province should be under a Lieutenant-Governor. See the Sanjivani - 11 Jan. 1896; Ibid., No.3.
  3. The Bharat Mitra (Calcutta) - 30 April 1896; Ibid., No.19; the Al-Punch (Bankipore) - 14 May 1896; Ibid., No.25; & the General and Gauhar-i-Asfi (Calcutta) - 30 June 1896; Ibid., No.27.
  4. The Bharat Mitra - 11 June 1896; Ibid., No.25; & the Darussaltanat and Urdu Guide (Calcutta) - 13 Aug. 1896; Ibid., No.34.
  5. The Hitavadi - 19 June 1896; Ibid., No.26. Also see the Bengalee - 20 June 1896.

Rumours about the contemplated transfer became public property, and caused much the same anxiety among public leaders as the transfer of Sylhet had in 1874. Memorials were submitted by the residents of Chittagong, Noakhali and Tippera, the Tripura Hitasadhini Sabha, the British Indian Association and the Indian Association protesting against the change. The objections urged against the transfer were: that the Chittagong Division would be administered by a new set of laws and a new system of administration inferior to the laws and administration of Bengal; that the Assam officers would be inferior to the members of the Bengal services; that the Division would be placed at a disadvantage in terms of communications; that it would no longer enjoy the jurisdiction of the Board of Revenue and that it would lose the privilege of electing a member to the Bengal Council. The Tripura Hitasadhini Sabha contended that Bengal and Assam differed in "language, literature, and past traditions,... civilization and ethnology" and could not be put together.<sup>1</sup> The British Indian Association, besides other arguments, held that the transfer of the division would result in loss and inconvenience to the zamindars and holders of land in the Chittagong Division as they would have to maintain a separate staff of lawyers in Assam.<sup>2</sup> Surendra Nath Banerjea who signed the memorial of the Indian Association as its Secretary pointed out that the Chittagong Division would cease to enjoy the right of electing a member to the Bengal Legislative Council. "The loss of this privilege", he argued, "can only be avoided by providing a Legislative Council for Assam, with the Chittagong Division having the right to return a member to this Council."<sup>3</sup>

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1. President, Hitasadhini Sabha to Govt. of Bengal - 16 Jan. 1897; P.L., 1897, Vol.24. para.3.
  2. Sec. British Indian Association to Govt. of Bengal - 8 Feb. 1897; Ibid., para.3.
  3. Surendra Nath Banerjea to Govt. of India - 21 Feb. 1896; Ibid., para.3.

Since the Government had made no public announcement, questions were asked both in the Governor-General's Council as well as the Bengal Council about the details of the proposal. On 6 February 1896, Babu Mohini Roy, a member of the Governor-General's Council asked for the publication of the papers connected with the transfer proposals. The Government replied that it was not necessary, but admitted that proposals were being considered.<sup>1</sup> On 27 February 1896, Roy again drew the attention of the Government to an article in the Amrita Bazar Patrika of 14 February 1896 which had stated that the transfer of the Dacca and Mymensingh districts was also under contemplation. The Government while stating the grounds of the proposed transfer of Chittagong Division denied the allegation of the paper and stated that it was only contemplating transferring the Chittagong Division.<sup>2</sup>

Though the press comment, backed as it was by memorials from major associations, was more widespread in 1896 than it had been in 1873, British officials were again ready to dismiss it as unimportant. W.B. Oldham, Commissioner of Chittagong, gave it as his view, on 7 February 1896, that there were hardly a thousand men in the whole Division opposed to the scheme and these were mainly pleaders, mukhtears, and school teachers who had been inspired by some "Central Organisation". His doubts were confirmed when Raj Kumar Navadip Chandra Dev Varma, Hon. Magistrate and Vice-Chairman, District Board, heading a deputation from Comilla against the scheme, admitted that the memorials had been prepared in Calcutta.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Office Memo. of 12 Feb., 1896; I.H.P.P., 1896, Vol.4958, Procs. 176-7 for March, Memo. No.370. Serajul Islam, President of the Tripura Hitasadhini Sabha & member of the Bengal Legislative Council also interpellated on 9 Feb. 1896 and asked for the publication of papers. See the Bengalee - 22 Feb. 1896.
  2. Office Memo. of 15 March 1896; I.H.P.P., 1896, Vol.4958, Procs. 180-1 for March, Memo. No.608. Also see the Englishman - 4 March 1896; & the Bengalee - 14 March 1896.
  3. Oldham, Commr. Chittagong to Govt. of Bengal - 7 Feb. 1897; P.L., 1897, L.No. 722G, paras. 2 & 8. Meetings of protest were also held in districts to be transferred but the

continued on following page

Oldham while denying the validity of most of the objections taken in the memorials, saw some advantages in the proposed transfer. Nevertheless he advised against it and thought that in any case it should not be made unless the new administrative machinery in Assam could provide the same standard of administration and services as Calcutta, and unless some substitute was given to Chittagong Division for the franchise as regards the Bengal Council. Oldham was of the view that the transfer of Chittagong Division with Hill Tippera alone would not serve the objects in view because of the "expense and trouble which it would entail, and the opposition and sense of grievance which it would cause". He therefore recommended the formation of a province of Eastern Bengal consisting of Chittagong Division and parts of Dacca Division, with Assam merely as an appendage, and with Chittagong or Dacca as the capital.<sup>1</sup> He stressed the political advantages of such a move:

"It would unite the most important part of the Muhammadan population of Eastern India under a system, the benefits of which for Muhammadans have, in the case of Sylhet and elsewhere, been proved. Although it is not in accordance with the history of Muhammadan usages in this part of the East for the Hindus to transact their business, till recently the part so taken was as agents or at most dewans - always as subordinates; while under modern developments, and by the aid of our laws, it promises to be that of masters. The present position of the Hindu minority (and it is a minority of the Hindu themselves) among the great Aryan Muhammadan population of Eastern

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fn. 3 continued from previous page:

general attitude of the public was apathetic and the Dacca Gazette accused them of sitting idle. See the Dacca Gazette - 3 Feb. 1896; B.N.N.R., No.7. The newspapers exhorted the people to agitate and the Tripura Prakash reported that the Calcutta associations and press had promised help. See the Tripura Prakash (Comilla) - 1st & 2nd fortnight of Paus, 1302, B.S., Ibid., (week ending 25 Jan. 1896).

1. Oldham to Govt. of Bengal - 7 Feb. 1896; op.cit., paras. 1-3, 15 & 16.

Bengal appears to be politically threatening in the same way, if not in the same degree, as what is called the Bania Raj, which has been allowed to grow up in the Panjab and in Hindustan, and to be as anomalous as the claim made by Poona Brahmans and Madras Mudeliars and Bengalis at large to competence and fitness for governing the martial races." 1

D.R. Lyall and C.C. Stevens, members of the Bengal Board of Revenue, favoured the transfer of Chittagong Division, as a means of encouraging and developing the port and easing the administrative burden upon Bengal. Lyall, commenting on the one horse administration of Assam, pointed out its over-dependence on Calcutta as an outlet for its trade. With the construction of a rail link with Chittagong that port would be improved and extended as the natural outlet for Assam, which would acquire new opportunities to develop its resources. Lyall stressed the unwieldiness of Bengal. He set out comparative figures for the provinces and therefore urged the transfer of Chittagong Division to Assam as a measure of administrative relief for Bengal. Both Lyall and Stevens, proposed, however, that the transfer be postponed until the settlement and rail link were completed.<sup>2</sup>

The judges of the High Court, by contrast, were hostile to the proposal. Echoing the complaints of the newspapers and memorials, they opposed the transfer of permanently settled districts of Bengal to an Assam administration which was non-regulation in character and lacked a Legislative Council, declaring it a "retrograde and mischievous step". More selfishly they objected to the transfer of judges to an administration with lower salaries and fewer chances of promotion.<sup>3</sup>

Sir Alexander Mackenzie, Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal

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1. Ibid., para.17.

2. Lyall's Memo. - 20 Feb. 1896; P.L., 1897, Encl. in Sec. Board of Revenue Bengal to Govt. of Bengal of 17 April 1896; L. No. 323 A. Also see Stevens' Memo. - 7 April 1896; Ibid.

3. Registrar, Calcutta High Court to Govt. of Bengal - 30 June 1896; Ibid., L. No.1646, paras. 3-12.

since December 1895, after reviewing the opinions expressed by the Commissioner of Chittagong, the Board of Revenue and the High Court judges, wrote to the Government of India that the transfer of the Chittagong Division to Assam was not called for if its primary justification was to relieve the Bengal Government of its burden of responsibilities. The main burdens imposed by the Chittagong Division were the revenue settlement and the pacification of the Lushais - and both these were progressing satisfactorily. Nor did its justification lie in any improvement to be secured to Chittagong Division: "no special advantage, such as it might not acquire while attached to Bengal, would accrue to the Division from its transfer to Assam". In his opinion, the real benefits from the transfer would be the material development secured by providing Assam with a sea-port, and the administrative gain of creating self-contained provincial services in the enlarged Assam. He thought that the protests against the proposal were not well founded and would soon disappear, as those against Sylhet's transfer had done. To meet the public objections, he suggested that the laws governing the transferred areas should not be changed, and to still bureaucratic doubts he emphasised that the transfer would not reduce the establishments of either the Bengal Secretariat or the Board of Revenue.<sup>1</sup>

However, the Chief Commissioner of Assam, Sir William Ward, who was about to retire having spent a major part of his service in Assam found himself free to express his views. He contested the view that Assam was a backward province. The old idea of the province being a non-regulation area had long been abandoned since its business was carried on a "legal basis". He emphasised that in such matters as public works the Surma Valley districts were far ahead of those of Chittagong Division. He pushed home Mackenzie's points about the material and administrative gains to Assam to be derived from

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1. Govt. of Bengal to Govt. of India - 13 Aug. 1896; Ibid., L. No. 24849, paras. 3-7.

the transfer of Chittagong Division and the additional advantage of a unified control of Lushai affairs. But he went beyond Mackenzie and the Members of the Board of Revenue by advocating the transfer of the Dacca and Mymensingh districts also. "One of the greatest drawbacks" emphasised Ward, "to the administration of the existing province lies in the system under which the services of officers in the Civil Service and other departments are temporarily lent by the Bengal Government". The new province with Dacca, Mymensingh, Noakhali, Tippera, Chittagong, the Chittagong Hill Tracts, the South Lushai Hills and the existing territory of Assam would have an area of 80,951 square miles and a population of 15,579,756 - large enough for the creation of independent services. The districts would give the proposed province a compact geographical boundary and secure a population fairly homogeneous in language and character. The tracts so transferred would not be absorbed by Assam but would form an important and integral part of the province while affording substantial relief to Bengal. Moreover, the areas would receive closer attention to their wants than hitherto given by Bengal "where those wants are likely to be overlooked or neglected". Ward suggested that the new province be named the "North Eastern Provinces" or the "Eastern Frontier Provinces".<sup>1</sup>

So far, the weight of official opinion had seemed to be in favour of a transfer. But in November 1896, Henry Cotton succeeded Ward as Chief Commissioner of Assam. By contrast Cotton was a Bengal officer having no or little experience of administration outside that province. And yet within two months of his stay in Assam, he produced a strong attack upon the idea of transferring the Chittagong Division to Assam. He forgot that not long ago, as Chief Secretary of the Bengal Government, he had argued the case for the transfer of Bengal's territories.<sup>2</sup> Cotton contested Ward's plea for giving

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1. Chief Commr. Assam to Govt. of India - 25 Nov. 1896;

Ibid., L. No. 583 For./4930 P, paras. 2-19.

2. See above, pp. 31-2.

independent services to Assam. His view reflected the approach of a typical civilian trying to protect the interests of his brother officials for he believed that even with Dacca and Mymensingh districts, Assam would be too small to support a self-contained service. Cotton observed:

"There would always be an insufficiency of higher posts in proportion to the cadre of the Province. The lot of Indian civilians who were destined to pass their whole service in the swamps of eastern Bengal or in the remote districts of Assam proper, would be highly invidious and calculated to create a feeling of discontent: while their chances of obtaining high prizes would be infinitesimally small. They would be permanently posted in a part of India which presents very few attractions, where the cost of living is great and the climate generally speaking is more unfavourable than usual to European constitutions. I can see nothing in the conditions of their service which would in any degree compensate them for the drawbacks or place their Indian career upon a level with that of civilians in other provinces." 1

Cotton did not seem to argue the case on its merits for he declared

"I do not think it is possible, and if possible, I do not think it would be desirable, to establish a self-contained service for Assam".

He admitted that Assam had made extraordinarily slow progress in terms of "population, cultivation, wealth and education" but he did not bother to examine the causes nor did he offer any suggestions about how to raise Assam from the pit. On the other hand he saw little hope of administrative or material gain for Assam from the transfer, and the certainty of loss to the people of Eastern Bengal who by association with backward Assam would lose the privileges of being under the High Court, the Board of Revenue and the Legislative Council. He thought that Chittagong District, which had benefited from the leadership of Calcutta, would resent its amputation. He

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1. Cotton's Note - 26 Jan. 1897; Ibid., Encl. in Offg. Sec. to Chief Commr. Assam to Govt. of India of 5 Feb. 1897; L. No. 45 For./366 P, para.2.



was sure that the zamindars who had interests in Calcutta and the inhabitants of Chittagong would "rue the day if the division is transferred" and that the proposal for the transfer of Dacca and Mymensingh districts if made public, would excite a storm of protest.<sup>1</sup>

Cotton's views are hard to explain in view of his later statement to Elgin, the Viceroy, that Assam was too poor to adopt measures of its own for improving its communications and craved for the help of the Government of India. He wrote to Elgin,

"Assam proper is one vast Government estate, most of which lies under jungle... and can never be developed unless the Government as landlord is prepared to recognise and act up to the responsibilities which devolve on it." 2

Similarly, his advocacy of the interests of the civilians is difficult to understand especially when he was reputed not to have enjoyed their confidence, and was known to be "too professedly pro-Native".<sup>3</sup> Perhaps in opposing the curtailment of the territories of Bengal, Cotton was influenced by his hope of becoming its Lieutenant-Governor, having been already considered as a prospective candidate.<sup>4</sup> It was perhaps for this reason again, that unlike Ward, he did not regard the arrangement for borrowing officers as unsatisfactory, holding that it was a constant encouragement for Bengal officers to know that

"in consequence of their temporary delegation to that province [Assam], they do not imperil their chances of rising to the highest offices in Bengal."<sup>5</sup>

Confronted with these diverse views, the Government of India under Lord Elgin, in May 1897, decided not to carry out the transfer but to postpone it sine die. It was however,

1. Ibid., paras. 8-11.

2. Cotton to Elgin - 31 May, 1897; Elgin Papers, Vol.70.

3. Westland to Elgin - 10 May 1897; Ibid.

4. Elgin to Hamilton - 19 May 1896; Ibid., Vol.14.

5. Cotton's Note - 26 Jan. 1896; op.cit., para.3.

decided to incorporate the South Lushai Hills with Assam.<sup>1</sup>

Probably, Elgin had no views of his own on the subject though it had undergone lengthy discussions among the officials, for little comment on the topic is to be found in the voluminous correspondence of the Viceroy who wrote to Hamilton, the Secretary of State:

"It was proposed to transfer the district of Chittagong from Bengal to Assam, but the transfer from the more organised to the less organised province was so bitterly opposed that we have abandoned it." 2

When the Government of India asked the Chief Commissioner if he was prepared to take over the Chittagong Hill Tracts as well as the Lushai Hills, he declined, because of the administrative difficulties involved.<sup>3</sup> The net outcome of the whole discussion was that the Lushai Hills were transferred to Assam on 1 April 1898.<sup>4</sup>

Thus we see that readjustment of the boundaries of the province of Bengal had often been considered since 1867 but any positive proposal for change had foundered upon official inertia, the vested interests of the officials as well as of local bodies, some public opposition and the cost involved in the change. Cultural differences between the Bengalis and Assamese as well as administrative reasons were advanced against the change, and the English-educated intelligentsia of the province were beginning to show a lively opposition to the scheme. Successive Lieutenant-Governors and Viceroys had conducted investigations and formulated plans for a rearrangement

1. Gov.-Gen. to Sec. of State - 14 July 1897; P.L., 1897, L. No.39.
2. Elgin to Hamilton - 2 Dec. 1897; Elgin Papers, Vol.15.
3. Chief Commr. Assam to Govt. of India - 9 June 1897; I.H.P.P., 1897, Vol.5180, Proc. for July, L. No. 360 For./2344 P. Also see Gov-Gen. to Sec. of State - 14 Oct. 1897; Ibid., Vol.5181, Proc. for Oct., L. No. 67.
4. Gov-Gen. to Sec. of State - 21 Sept. 1899; J. & P. Dept., File 1921, Vol.521 of 1899, L. No. 178, para.1. The date of the transfer of the Lushai Hills as given by A.R.Mallick, in his article on "The Muslims and the Partition of Bengal, 1905", A History of the Freedom Movement, Vol.III, Part I, p.3, is wrong.

of Bengal's boundaries. The consensus of official opinion had established that the administrative machinery of the province was inadequate for such extensive territories. But though the administrators had recognised the weakness in the structure of the government, they had failed to provide an effective remedy. All attempts to curtail Bengal's boundaries had been defied. The net result of the lengthy deliberation was the transfer of an insignificant part - the Lushai Hills. Such feeble tinkering with a growing problem could surely not long continue.

## Chapter II

### The Evolution of the Scheme of Territorial Redistribution of 1903

By 1897 the reduction of Bengal's unwieldy administrative area had been under consideration for over a quarter of a century, but no effective action had been taken. The masterful Curzon, determined to make his mark and conscious that "things had been slipping quietly on for years, all the bigger questions being shelved and the administration in general getting into a rut", was not the man to let matters drift further.<sup>1</sup> In 1902 he turned his reforming attention to the "antiquated and anomalous" provincial boundaries.<sup>2</sup> Action followed attention; in 1903 a first scheme for Bengal was ready, in 1904 it was expanded, and in October 1905, the partition of Bengal was at last achieved.

That partition did not "spring like Minerva from the head of Jove".<sup>3</sup> It was the fruit of long deliberations on the future boundaries of several provinces, and was rooted in wider problems than those of Bengal alone. Nevertheless, since the partition proved the most momentous of the changes, writers have sought to establish its origin or paternity. Thus Lovat Fraser has contended that it was a casual suggestion made in 1901 by Andrew Fraser, Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces, that Oriya be substituted for Hindi as the language of the courts in Sambalpur district, rather than any suggestion of Curzon's, which led to the partition of Bengal.<sup>4</sup> Subsequent

1. Curzon to Balfour - 31 March 1901; Balfour Papers, No. 49732, B.M.
2. Curzon to Strachey - 25 July 1903; C.C., Vol.182. Also see Reed, S., The India I Knew, 1897, 1947. p.45.
3. Extracts from Sir Henry Cotton's Speech of 11 Jan. 1905; The Case against the Break-up of Bengal, Tract 1037, Appendix B, p.12.
4. Fraser, L., op.cit., p.377.

writers have all accepted this version.<sup>1</sup>

Sambalpur had always been an Oriya island in a Hindi-speaking Central Provinces, and officials for the district had either to be recruited from Orissa or from within the district itself. Their transfer to Hindi-speaking districts had been difficult, so that it might be said that separate services had to be maintained for the district.<sup>2</sup> In 1895, therefore, it had been decreed that Hindi should be the official language of Sambalpur.<sup>3</sup> The decision naturally led to an outcry in the press: the Statesman and Friend of India criticised the unjustified departure from the practice of conducting the administration in the language of the people,<sup>4</sup> the Utkaldipika and the Samvad Vahika demanded that rather than impose Hindi, Sambalpur should be transferred to Orissa.<sup>5</sup>

From 1896 to 1901 various deputations waited on the Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces to impress upon him the hardships they suffered. They could not understand official correspondence, court notices and summonses written in Hindi; they had often to travel long distances to towns where Hindi interpreters could be found;<sup>6</sup> Government posts were going to Hindi-speaking outsiders "in preference to equally competent Uriyas available on the spot." They pleaded, therefore, either

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1. For instance see Mallick, op.cit., pp.4-6; <sup>Sufia</sup> Ahmed, <sup>op.cit.</sup> pp.325-8. Sufia even gives primary importance to the solution of Oriya problem and makes the readjustment of Bengal's territories dependent on that problem. She writes that the decision to transfer the Oriya tracts to Bengal "merely added to the already swollen size of Bengal and made some load-shedding by that province the more urgent". Sufia's analysis is wrong. Also see Ghosh, P.C., The Development of the Indian National Congress, 1892-1909, pp.100-2; & Mazumdar, A.C., Indian National Evolution, p.201.
  2. Fraser, A.H.L., Among Indian Rajahs and Ryots, p.313.
  3. Fraser's Note - 5 Oct. 1901; I.H.J.P., 1902, Vol.6355, Proc.245 for July, paras. 12-6.
  4. The Statesman and Friend of India - 14 May 1895.
  5. The Utkaldipika (Cuttack) - 11, 18, 26 May 1895; B.N.N.R., No.26. Ibid., of 3 Aug. 1895; No.37; Ibid., of 2 & 9 Nov. 1895; No.51. Also see the Samvad Vahika (Cuttack) - 31 Oct. 1895; Ibid., No.44.
  6. Fraser, A.H.L., op.cit., p.314.

for the restoration of Oriya or for the transfer of Sambalpur to the Orissa Division of Bengal.<sup>1</sup> In 1901, Fraser went in person to Sambalpur to make enquiries on the spot. On 5 October 1901, he made his recommendations that either Oriya be restored as the official language or that Sambalpur be transferred to the Orissa Division. If such a transfer would overload Bengal, then he suggested, Orissa might be transferred to the Central Provinces.<sup>2</sup>

In the end Oriya was reinstated as the administrative language of Sambalpur, but not before a prolonged debate had taken place amongst the officials of the Government of India about possible territorial rearrangements.<sup>3</sup> B. Fuller and J.P. Hewett opposed the transfer of Orissa to the Central Provinces, and so did C.M. Rivaz. E.F.G. Law, however, wished to keep the question open as did J.F. Finlay, whose minute of 14 May 1902, was the last to appear.<sup>4</sup> Then the matter was referred to Curzon. He was provoked to compose his famous minute of 24 May 1902, usually known as the "Round and Round Note", accusing officers of

"calmly carving about and re-arranging provinces on paper, colouring and re-colouring the map of India according to geographical, historical, political, or linguistic considerations - in the manner that appealed most to their fancy ....".  
"For 14 months", he acidly observed, "it never occurred to a single human being in the Departments to mention the matter, or to suggest that

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1. Madan Mohan Misra and others to Viceroy - 18 Jan. 1901; I.H.J.P., Vol.6355, Proc.243 for July.
  2. Fraser's Note - 5 Oct. 1901; op.cit., paras. 12-6.
  3. Govt. of India to Chief Commr. Central Provinces - 28 May 1902; I.H.J.P., 1902, Vol.6355, Proc.248, para.2. Also see Procs. 310-11 for Feb. 1903; Ibid., 1903, Vol.6587, & N.T.C.I., C.C., Vol.247, pp.1-2.
  4. Rivaz was the Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab; Fuller, Sec.Revenue & Agriculture Dept., (appointed Chief Commr. Assam, April 1902, & Lieutenant-Governor of E.B. & A. Oct. 1905 - Aug. 1906); Hewett, Sec. Home Dept., (appointed Chief Commr. Central Provinces, Sept.1902 & Lieutenant-Governor, U.P. Jan. 1907), Finlay, Sec. Finance & Commerce Dept., Govt. of India; Law was a member of the Viceroy's Council. For details see Fuller's Note - 23 Jan.1902; Hewett's Note - 29 Jan.1902; Law's Note - 22 March 1902, & Finlay's Note - 14 May 1902; N.T.C.I., op.cit.

it should be mentioned. Round and round, like the diurnal revolution of the earth, went the file, stately, solemn, sure and slow; and now, in due season it has completed its orbit, and I am invited to register the concluding stage."<sup>1</sup>

At the same time, however, a discussion was opened in Council on the whole problem of inter-provincial rearrangements, one result of which was to be the partition of Bengal. It was on this fact that Lovat Fraser based his claim that the originating impulse was Andrew Fraser's rather than Curzon's.<sup>2</sup>

But the argument is false. By July 1901, Curzon seemed already to have been impressed by the magnitude of Bengal as he had decided to take over the political charge of Sikkim.<sup>3</sup> Besides, the Secretaries and the Deputy Secretaries, in all their long discussion, had confined themselves to the future of Sambalpur and Orissa only, never lifting their eyes to Bengal's wider problems or the possibilities of a separation of the East Bengal districts. It was on Curzon's suggestion that Ibbetson<sup>4</sup> initiated a discussion, on a higher level, of the future adjustment of provincial boundaries which Curzon described thus:

"The question arises out of the approaching incorporation of Berar in British India. We shall have to decide how much of Berar to give to the Central Provinces, whether to give any to Bombay, (and whether any to Madras - deleted). While we are doing this, I suggested in Council that we should take up the question of readjustment of boundaries all round. It concerns (1) "ssam - is Assam to have a maritime exit - i.e., shall we transfer Chittagong? (2) Bengal - is Bengal over-swollen, i.e., shall we cut off Chittagong and Orissa? (3) Madras - should any Uriya-speaking

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1. Curzon's Minute - 24 May 1902; Ibid., pp.3-4.

2. Fraser, L., op.cit., p.376.

3. Curzon to Hamilton - 10 July 1901; Hamilton Collection, Vol.10.

4. Ibbetson, Denzil Charles Jelf. Held various civil appointments in the Punjab (1871-95); Sec.Revenue Dept., Govt. of India, 1896; Chief Commr. Central Provinces, 1898, Member Viceroy's Council, 1902; Lieutenant-Governor, Punjab, 1905, (temporary), Confirmed in 1907.

people remain under Madras? (4) Central Provinces - shall they have a port? Shall they absorb all the Uriya-speaking people? How much of Berar shall be given to them? (5) Bombay - shall we give to them the Mahratta Districts of the Central Provinces and Berar? (6) The Punjab - if Bombay is thus augmented, shall we dock it of Sind and hand over Sind to the Punjab?

All these are questions of supreme importance and I shall be glad if the Departments will discuss them. Please, however, do not keep me quite in the dark until the whole thing is over".<sup>1</sup>

Again, before the file had completed its revolutions Curzon had already written on 30 April 1902, to Hamilton that he proposed to take up the whole question of provincial boundaries. Finally, it is clear from that letter that it was the incorporation of Berar in British India, not the language problem of Sambalpur, which prompted the general discussion from which partition issued. In his letter to Hamilton, Curzon wrote:

"When the Berar affair is concluded, the question will arise of adding the greater part of it to the Central Provinces. I am not sure that this will not be a proper occasion upon which to examine into larger question of the boundaries of Governments or some of them in general. Bengal is unquestionably too large a charge for any single man".<sup>2</sup>

Partition for Bengal evidently grew out of a wide discussion of British India's provincial boundaries. It is no less clear that if a single individual is to be named as its originator, he must be Curzon.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Curzon's Minute - 24 May 1902; N.T.C.I., op.cit., p.4.
  2. Curzon to Hamilton - 30 April 1902; Hamilton Collection, Vol.13. Also see Gov-Gen. to Sec. of State - 3 Dec. 1903; P.L., 1903, Vol.31, L. No.73. Also see Curzon's Minute - 19 May 1903; N.T.C.I., op.cit., p.49, para.2.

3. Oddly enough Curzon himself seemed to repudiate his offspring. In his note of 26 Dec. 1904, he wrote:

"We commenced by discussing the transfer of Chittagong, Dacca and Mymensingh because those proposals had been specifically placed before us in an official letter by the Chief Commissioner. The transfer of Berar to the Central Provinces led us at the same time to consider the question of the boundaries of that province, and to discuss the

continued on following page:



From the middle of 1902 plans for a general territorial adjustment were discussed by the members of the Viceroy's Council and other officers. There were no particular guiding principles laid down, and proposals were put forward on many grounds: the size of provinces, administrative homogeneity, geographical, ethnological and linguistic affinities, financial viability, prospects of material development, accessibility to a port, the avoidance of excessive administrative burdens. Often, too, these factors were subordinated to considerations of British political security. The officials displayed great diversity of opinion, both on principles and details, and a considerable degree of inconsistency in their arguments. Doubtless the arguments used were often merely rationalisations of motives and attitudes not publicly declared. The proposals of individual officials reflected past experience and training, their links with particular areas, personal likes and dislikes, and considerations, too, of personal convenience and advancement. Curzon was a decided and autocratic viceroy, and the views of the master may well have affected the approach of subordinates whose hopes of promotion after a long and weary career depended upon viceregal recommendations.

The key points in the discussions were Berar; Sind, the Oriya-speaking tracts of Bengal, Madras and the Central Provinces; and Bengal and Assam. Berar was perhaps the simplest issue, for the decision lay only between adding it to Bombay or to the Central Provinces. Sind's future had been debated since 1856, mainly in terms of a union with the Punjab designed

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footnote 3 continued from previous page:

future of Chutia Nagpur. The proposal of Sir A. Fraser had already brought under our notice the question of the Uriya-speaking peoples and the future of Orissa." Curzon here ignores the fact that the official deliberations he initiated had begun at least six months before the receipt of the letter from Fuller, Chief Commr. Assam. Moreover, Fuller was in no sense an advocate of the transfer of Dacca and Mymensingh. See Curzon's Note - 26 Dec. 1904; N.R.P.B., C.C., Vol. 247, p. 67. Also see Chief Commr. Assam to Govt. of India - 30 Jan. 1903; N.T.C.I., op.cit., L. No. 32 For./244P, paras. 11-2.

to consolidate the Frontier Province, on the different basis of the similarity of canal administration in Sind and the Punjab, the rail link between them, and the need to give the Punjab an outlet to the sea. The Oriya problem was a linguistic one and sprang from the difficulties of securing officials for the Oriya-speaking areas of Sambalpur, Ganjam, Vizagapatam and Orissa. Finally consideration of Bengal's boundaries sprang from their unwieldiness, and from the desire to reinvigorate the administration of tiny, land-locked Assam. As will be seen all these questions were interconnected, and as discussion proceeded upon all of them at once, and as arguments applied in one field reappeared in another, they will be considered as a whole in this chapter, first the western and central areas and then Bengal and Assam.

The discussions were opened by Hewett, the Secretary of the Home Department of the Government of India, with a note of 20 August 1902, on the future of Berar and Sind. His proposals provide a nice example of the way in which the problems of boundary adjustment interlocked, and of the difficulties created by the principle of compensation - the assumption that once a province was in possession of a territory, it should not be deprived of it without some territorial compensation. Hewett suggested that Berar should be amalgamated with the Central Provinces, arguing that its "position, physical characteristics and administrative arrangements other than its revenue system" marked it out for inclusion in the Central Provinces - of which he was within a month to become Chief Commissioner. More surprisingly he reversed his recommendations, made in 1887 when he was Under-Secretary of the Home Department, that Sind should be transferred to the Punjab. He argued that the strong frontier administration, provided by the formation of the North-West Frontier Province, made Sind's transfer from Bombay unnecessary. He also pointed out that Bombay would object to the loss of Sind, since that would involve a loss of prestige and curtailment of the prospects of Bombay government

servants. If Sind were transferred Bombay could be compensated by the addition of Berar, but this was smaller in area, population and revenue than Sind. Hewett therefore suggested the transfer of the Maratha districts of the Nagpur Division to Bombay, which would unite all Marathi-speaking people in that Presidency. In that case, since the Central Provinces, over whose destinies he was shortly to preside, would suffer a loss, he suggested that parts of Chota Nagpur<sup>1</sup> be transferred to that province. Any transfer of the Orissa Division of Bengal he rejected, however, unless the Central Provinces were raised to a Lieutenant-Governorship.<sup>2</sup>

Ibbetson, whose contribution was made on 28 February 1903, had long experience of the Punjab administration, and he had expectations of becoming Lieutenant-Governor of the province. He came down firmly for the transfer of Sind to the Punjab, and for the union of Berar with Bombay. In favour of such compensation he argued that ryotwari Bombay was more akin to Berar than the zamindari Central Provinces. Neither Berar nor Bombay had tenancy laws, their assessment systems were similar, and for many years the Bombay Code and the rulings of the Bombay High Court had been adopted in Berar. A Bombay officer would have no difficulty in dealing with revenue questions in Berar while a Central Provinces officer would be "absolutely at sea". Ibbetson also disagreed with Hewett about transferring the Marathi-speaking areas of the Central Provinces to Bombay. It might be advantageous to put the Maratha areas under one administration but the "advantage would be dearly purchased at the price of bringing Nagpur under the influence of Poona".<sup>3</sup> There was far less danger in bringing the Marathas of Berar under Bombay. He pointed out,

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1. Nagpur, Wardha, Bhandara and Chanda districts of Nagpur Division and Burhanpur tehsil of Nimar district.

2. Hewett's Note - 28 Aug. 1902; N.T.C.I., op.cit., paras. 3-10.

3. Ibbetson's Note - 28 Feb. 1903; Ibid., paras. 3-6.

"Nagpur is a large city, where the educated urban element is strong; and it is also an old centre of Mahratta rule. The Berars include no such possible intrigue, and their population is practically rural".<sup>1</sup>

At this point Curzon could no longer refrain from giving his opinions. He found his "tired civilians" without vitality or initiative,<sup>2</sup> and therefore did not fear to constitute himself a "sort of judge ... not refraining from the offer of advice as to a final decision".<sup>3</sup> With his sense of mission and his belief that

"we came here in obedience to what I call the decree of Providence for the lasting benefit of millions of the human race",<sup>4</sup>

he rejected all the careful balancing of compensation. The welfare of the people to be transferred, and of the areas into which they were to be incorporated should be the test. He therefore laid it down that

"in the readjustment of boundaries and territories upon which we are about to embark, the less we disturb rooted relations the better, and the more we abstain from the dangerous plea of compensation, the sooner shall we reach our goal. Any man who starts with a perhaps unexpressed desire to add to one province at the expense of another, finds himself unconsciously in favour of compensating the latter by giving it something else".<sup>5</sup>

Curzon had in fact already made up his mind to incorporate Berar with the Central Provinces nine months earlier.<sup>6</sup> But he now set out the arguments for their union. He made it

1. Ibid., para.17. In 1876, Lord Northbrook had also opposed the transfer of Nagpur Division to Bombay as he thought that "it would be a political disadvantage, and that it might become a political danger, to increase the area of the Presidency of Bombay". Ibid., para.15.
2. Curzon to Hamilton - 15 June 1903; Hamilton Collection, Vol.16.
3. Curzon's Minute - 19 May 1903; N.T.C.I., op.cit., para.4.
4. Curzon to Morley - 17 June 1900; C.C., Vol.181.
5. Curzon's Minute - 6 March 1903; N.T.C.I., op.cit., pp.21-2.
6. Curzon to Dawkins - 2 July 1902; C.C., Vol.182.

clear that he had the "most profound distrust" of the land revenue system of Bombay where the officers were less in touch with the people than elsewhere. He therefore brushed aside Ibbetson's argument about the identity in the revenue systems of Berar and Bombay by stating that this could not be "the sole or even the decisive criterion". He pointed out that geographically Berar was more closely connected with the Central Provinces, that its development could be set in motion more effectively if it were a part of the Central Provinces, and that if annexed to Bombay, Berar would be "more or less an out-house or barn in Bombay farmyard...."<sup>1</sup>

However to Curzon all these points were subordinate to another consideration which affected his thinking "more powerfully". That consideration was the political inexpediency of a union of Berar with Bombay which would add "to the strength or solidarity of the Maratha community." The Berar and Central Provinces Marathas were peaceful and moderate, while those of Bombay were "the most able and the most dangerous of the opponents of our rule in India." "Why then", Curzon asked

"should we go and gratuitously make a present to Poona of this enormous accretion of political strength, thus sowing discontent and sedition among the people at present quiet and loyal, multiplying the forces of our enemies, consolidating the Maratha race, and providing an irresistible argument for the filching at a later date of the remaining Maratha population of the Central Provinces".<sup>2</sup>

Curzon was unwilling to oppose the views of Ibbetson, who had governed the Central Provinces. He therefore decided to invite the views of Fraser who had recently relinquished the charge of that province and whom Curzon thought not to be "affected by the slightest prepossession one way or the other"

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1. Curzon's Minute - 6 March 1903; N.T.C.I., op.cit., pp.21-2.

2. Ibid.

having already been appointed Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal.<sup>1</sup>

Fraser who had recently been to Sind, as President of the Police Commission, thought that Sind should be transferred to the Punjab. He argued that their contiguity, their close trade links and the resemblance in their agricultural methods favoured the union of the two tracts.<sup>2</sup>

On Berar, however, Fraser followed Curzon's line, and plunged for union with the Central Provinces, even though this involved ignoring principles he had applied to Sind when advising union with the Punjab. Thus he followed Curzon in setting aside the identity in the revenue systems of Bombay and Berar as a determining factor. He argued that differences in land tenure between Berar and the Central Provinces were "more in theory than in practice", that the well-defined record of rights for Central Provinces tenants could be adopted for Berar, and that the district administration of Berar corresponded to that of the Central Provinces. Again, though he admitted that Berar had trade links with Bombay, he argued that new feeders to the Nagpur line would improve Berar's connections with the Central Provinces. On the political aspects Fraser followed Ibbetson in believing that Nagpur should not go to Bombay;

"it would involve - the tremendous political blunder of consolidating the whole Maratha community of India under the influence and guidance of Poona".<sup>3</sup>

Like Ibbetson, he thought that to unite the Berar Marathas with Bombay would not be "so serious a blunder". Fraser's arguments were thus almost wholly a defence of the position which Curzon had taken up.<sup>4</sup>

1. Ibid., p.22. Curzon also invited the opinions of Fuller, the Chief Commr. Assam, Barr, the resident of Berar and Hare the Offg. Commr. Berar.

2. Fraser's Note - 28 March 1903; N.T.C.I., op.cit., p.23, paras. 2-5.

3. Ibid., pp.24-6, paras. 7-15.

4. Ibid.

On 23 April Ibbetson returned to the discussion, with a defence of his position against Curzon's criticism. He stated that any territorial transfer should be decided on its own merits and that a "desire to soothe the wounded feelings of a Governor, or to maintain the prestige of a Secretariat" should not be allowed to influence the decision of the government. He believed that the administration suited to the masses in India was the rule of a strong man but thought that large charges under a Lieutenant-Governor generally caused a lessening of effective control. He would have liked to see the division of the country into Chief Commissionerships. But he realised that the day was passed for putting such an ideal into practice. The "state of advancement, not so much of the administrative organisation, as of the people to be governed" should now be the criterion for territorial reorganisation. "To primitive people", observed Ibbetson,

"our present system of government by machinery is especially unintelligible, repugnant and unsuited; and where such folk abound, I think it is of importance to keep the charge so small that the personal individual element in its administration can still be preserved by its rulers". 1

Ibbetson did not proceed, however, to apply his philosophical theories to the problem on hand. He ignored his main criterion for territorial redistribution - the state of advancement of the people - when he recommended the amalgamation of the advanced districts of Bengal with backward Assam. Similarly he forgot his plea to keep charges small when he advocated the addition of Sind to the Punjab. Nor could he get away from the "desire to soothe the wounded feelings of a Governor", for he returned to the difficulty of taking away Sind without compensating Bombay, whose

"influence in England is great out of all proportion to her importance in India". 2

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1. Ibbetson's Note - 23 April 1903; Ibid., paras.4-7.  
 2. Ibid., para.29.

Ibbetson therefore insisted that Berar be transferred to Bombay. To support his case he contested Fraser's point about the resemblances between Berar and the Central Provinces, declaring that they were "superficial, while the differences are radical and deep-seated".<sup>1</sup> But his real purpose was to justify compensation to Bombay.<sup>2</sup> As he himself put it:

"if compensation is to be taken into account at all, Bombay has some fair chance to be compensated if we take Sindh away from her. I believe, however, that if Berar is given to her, she will part with Sindh without murmur -- so that if we cannot have either transfer unless we have both, I would make both".<sup>3</sup>

Since this was unlikely to convince Curzon, Ibbetson further stressed close links between Sind and the Punjab. He pointed out that whereas the journey from Karachi to Bombay took fifty-four hours by rail, "with four changes of system and two breaks of gauge", Lahore was only thirty-four hours by a single continuous line. With this rail and the river link Karachi could become the port for the Punjab and so increase its prosperity. Since the Sind revenue system was ryotwari whereas the Punjab system was zamindari type, he argued that laws and systems grow and are modified and that the Sind system would soon become identical to that of the Punjab: both Sind and the Punjab were still emerging from the "patriarchal stage". Sind's merger with the Punjab, and the grant of representation in the Punjab Legislative Council would speed the process of assimilation besides providing for greater attention and more sympathetic appreciation of Sind's special needs.<sup>4</sup>

Ibbetson could not, however, conceal the fact that his advocacy for Sind's amalgamation with the Punjab was influenced by his desire to become its Lieutenant-Governor. He noted that after the formation of the North-West Frontier Province

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1. Ibid., para. 11.

2. Fuller's Note as cited by Curzon in his Minute of 19 May 1903; N.T.C.I., op.cit., p. 51.

3. Ibbetson's Note - 23 April 1903; op.cit., para. 29.

4. Ibid., paras. 15-26.



"the Lieutenant-Governorship of the Punjab has been reduced from ... the premier Lieutenant-Governorship in India, the most interesting and important change [sic for charge] open to an Indian civilian, to what it is now, the least interesting and least important of all the Lieutenant-Governorships." 1

Curzon was not convinced by Ibbetson's arguments in which he detected the self-interest of a man who was "almost certain to be Rivaz's successor in the Punjab". As he wrote to Hamilton, Ibbetson had pleaded vigorously for giving Berar to Bombay "in order to be able to filch Sind from the Punjab".<sup>2</sup> Curzon had found official opinion almost unanimous against the incorporation of Berar with Bombay and observed:

"the last thing that we want to do is to consolidate the Maratha race. We hear enough of Shivaji as it is."<sup>3</sup>

Curzon having decided to give Berar to the Central Provinces, recognised that

"the world being largely governed by sentiment, there is but the faintest chance of withdrawing Sind from Bombay, unless the latter can be reimbursed from some other quarter, and ... that, eliminating Berar, no such reimbursement is possible." 4

He had therefore to reverse all the arguments Ibbetson had marshalled to bolster up his plans to provide compensation to Bombay for the loss of Sind. Curzon recognised that if a solution could have been produced, "fettered by no prescription or traditions", Sind could probably become a part of the Punjab. But Sind had been attached to Bombay for sixty years. During this period, it had "learnt gradually to assimilate its sentiments and practices to those of Bombay." The historical continuity of their associations could not be broken without violence to the ties and bonds between them. Curzon was

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1. Ibid., para.29.

2. Curzon to Hamilton - 10 June 1903; Hamilton Collection, Vol.16.

3. Curzon's Minute - 19 May 1903; N.T.C.I., op.cit., para.9. Also see Gov-Gen. to Sec. of State - 1 June 1903; I.H.P.P., 1903, Vol.6572, Proc. 349.

4. Curzon's Minute - 19 May 1903; op.cit., para.11.

conscious that this argument was to be overruled in the case of Bengal. But he argued that in Bengal's case reduction of its territories was necessary in order to relieve the overburdened administration, whereas no evidence had been forthcoming that Bombay was weighed down, or that Sind was a bar to its administrative efficiency. As for the communications, he argued that Karachi was as accessible by sea from Bombay as it was by land from Lahore and the contemplated railways between Bombay and Sind would free Sind from the isolation described by Ibbetson. Moreover, the Bombay Government had taken an interest in the affairs and development of Sind and had not treated it as the "Cinderella of the Presidency". On the other hand, the Punjab was undergoing a process of development, with new canal colonies springing up. It needed funds for its "own family and could spare little for any foundling from the outside." Thus the development of Karachi, which Ibbetson had thought would follow from the transfer of Sind, would in fact, have been hampered. Curzon also argued against giving Karachi to a province which had no "experience in maritime trade". The Punjab already contained an area of 133,741 square miles (97,209 in British territory) and a population of twenty-five million, (twenty million in British territory). The Chenab and Jhelum colonies had brought two million acres of land under cultivation and had added about a million of people; the Lower Bari and the Sind Sagar schemes were expected to add another two million acres and the same number of people. Thus in Curzon's opinion, the Punjab was already a province of reasonable size and the transfer of Sind would involve too great a pressure on the Lieutenant-Governor of the province.<sup>1</sup>

Moreover, even Curzon, who had reprimanded Ibbetson for his plea of compensation and had directed his officials to argue the case on its merits could not overlook the loss of prestige which Sind's transfer would bring to Bombay, nor the injury to its services if the members of the Bombay Commission

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1. Ibid., paras. 11-14.

lost the Commissionership of Sind which stood next in dignity to membership of the Viceroy's Council.<sup>1</sup>

Having argued the case, Curzon advised his Council that Berar should be amalgamated with the Central Provinces and that the proposal for the transfer of Sind be dropped.<sup>2</sup> Accordingly he communicated the decision to Hamilton:

"There is really no case at all for giving Berar to any province but the Central Provinces, and I only had to state the case to Council to get them unanimously to accept my views." 3

Hamilton agreed with Curzon with regard to Berar but was dubious about Sind. He thought that there was not much in common between the people of Bombay and Sind and recommended Sind's transfer to the Punjab. To compensate Bombay, he suggested that the northern districts of the Central Provinces might be given to Bombay and the Central Provinces compensated by the inclusion of Berar and the addition of Chota Nagpur from Bengal. However, he was not sure if it was "worth-while to make so many changes."<sup>4</sup>

Since Hamilton was not pressing in his recommendations, Curzon disregarded them, reminding Hamilton that the proposal to hand over parts of the Central Provinces had been mooted in 1888-1889 and had been quashed and that it could no longer be entertained as the latter were "so much better administered than Bombay that there would be a great outcry if the proposal were now revived".<sup>5</sup> Berar became a part of the Central Provinces with effect from 1 October 1903.<sup>6</sup>

1. Ibid., para. 14(iii)

2. Ibid., paras. 10 & 16.

3. Curzon to Hamilton - 10 June 1903; Hamilton Collection, Vol.16.

4. Hamilton to Curzon - 3 July 1903; Hamilton Collection, Vol.5.

5. Curzon to Hamilton - 22 July 1903; Ibid., Vol.16.

6. Govt. of India's Notification No.4246-1B of 11 Sept. 1903; I.H.P.P., 1903, Vol.6573, Proc.292.

The official discussions on the redistribution of Bengal's territories went on simultaneously with those about the transfer of Berar and Sind. It took more than fourteen months before the first scheme of partition was formulated and submitted to the Secretary of State on 3 December 1903. It may be noted that in all these lengthy discussions the separation of Bihar was neither examined nor seriously considered. Ibbetson and Curzon each casually referred to it on one occasion only and dismissed it as impractical without giving any reasons for their judgement.<sup>1</sup> Nor did any scheme for a commissionership on the Sind model probably for Orissa or the Chota Nagpur Divisions come under review, though Curzon, while advocating the retention of Sind with Bombay, had thought "the survival of a small patriarchal polity, reasonably independent and happily self-contained" like that of Sind to be preferable to the "iron heel of Secretariat administration."<sup>2</sup> Again, no improvement in the administration of Bengal through organic changes such as the conversion of Bengal into a Governor's province with an Executive Council was either discussed or examined.

The main aims in the territorial redistribution of Bengal were to relieve the Bengal administration and to develop the province of Assam. It was argued that if Bengal suffered from being too large, Assam suffered no less from being too small.<sup>3</sup> The minor aim was to provide more adequately for certain Oriya-speaking areas of the Central Provinces and Madras. The only method considered for the solution of the problem was that of a redistribution of territories. Moreover, only two areas were considered as possible recipients of territory, the Central Provinces and Assam as the other provinces were already too large to absorb additional territories.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Ibbetson's Note - 23 April 1903; N.T.C.I., op.cit., para.32, and Curzon's Minute - 19 May 1903; Ibid., para.20.

2. Ibid., para. 14(v).

3. Ibbetson's Note - 23 April 1903; Ibid., para.33.

4. Curzon's Minute - 1 June 1903. Ibid., para.20.

The officials considered the redistribution of the following territories:-

Orissa; the Oriya-speaking tracts of the Central Provinces and Madras; Chota Nagpur; the Chittagong Division, and the Dacca and Mymensingh districts. Their arguments and conclusions will be considered in that order.

Orissa's transfer to the Central Provinces was opposed firstly because Orissa had been associated with Bengal and had been under its administration for nearly a century. Secondly, it was thought that the educated classes, who had been connected with Calcutta for a long time would be opposed to the transfer. Thirdly, the construction of the East Coast Railway had brought Cuttack nearer to Calcutta whereas communications between Orissa and the Central Provinces were poor.<sup>1</sup>

Curzon accepted the arguments against amputating Orissa as conclusive and decided against transferring it to the Central Provinces.<sup>2</sup>

The Oriya-speaking Tracts consisted of Orissa and the Singhbhum district under Bengal; the Ganjam district, the Ganjam and the Vizagapatam Agency Tracts under Madras and the Sambalpur district and its Feudatory States under the Central Provinces.

The multiplicity of language in these areas had created many administrative difficulties, particularly in the case of Sambalpur district.<sup>3</sup> In Madras, Tamil, Telugu and Canarese were spoken but there were also some Oriya-speaking people in the

1. See Hewett's Note of 28 Aug. 1902; N.T.C.I., op.cit., para.12; Fraser's Note of 28 March 1903; Ibid., paras.16 & 17; Ibbetson's Note of 23 April 1903; Ibid., paras. 56-65. Hewett thought the transfer "possible" but he was doubtful if it was "expedient" unless the Central Provinces were made a Lieutenant-Governorship. Fraser opposed the transfer on account of Orissa's close connections with Calcutta. Ibbetson too thought that commercially Orissa was linked with Calcutta.
2. Curzon's Minute - 1 June 1903; Ibid., para.29.
3. See above, pp.48-9.

Ganjam district and the Ganjam and Vizagapatam Agency Tracts. The Oriya-speaking areas under Bengal, the Central Provinces and Madras were only a fraction of each province. It was difficult to administer them in the language of the people. Attempts had been made to provide the areas with officers who knew Oriya, but often a replacement was difficult. The present occasion provided an opportunity to consider amalgamating all the areas into one unit.<sup>1</sup>

At this time the Government of India received two memorials, one from the Raja of Balasore and the other from the Oriyas of Ganjam, praying that the Oriyas of Madras, Sambalpur and Orissa should be united under the Government of Bengal or under any single administration. The Oriyas of Ganjam argued that they had been separated from the Oriyas of Orissa like "a limb separated from the body" and had an "ill-assorted union" with the Telugus and Tamils, from whom they differed in language and social and religious customs.<sup>2</sup>

Without examining the genuineness of the memorials, or asking the Madras government for an expression of its views, Curzon proposed that all the Oriyas be united in Orissa. At the start of the official discussions, Hewett had opposed the transfer of the Oriya tracts of Madras believing that they had been well governed by the Madras government in the past and that Madras would be opposed to their amputation.<sup>3</sup> But Fraser,

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1. Ibbetson's Note - 23 April 1903; N.T.C.I., op.cit., para. 61. Also see Curzon's Minute of 1 June 1903; Ibid., para. 31.
  2. Haribara Tripatee to Private Sec. to Viceroy - 9 March 1903; I.H.P.P., 1903, Vol. 6573, Proc. 151, paras. 7, 9 & 14. There was also a counter memorial which asserted that the memorial asking for the transfer of Ganjam was from "self-styled people". See Sec. Behrampore Association to Private Sec. to Viceroy - 21 April 1903; Ibid., Proc. 152. Also see memorial from some residents, Oriyas and Telegus of Ganjam district, Ibid., Proc. 154. Also see Curzon's Minute of 1 June 1903; N.T.C.I., op.cit., para. 34(ii). Also see Utkaldipika - 21 Feb. & 25 April 1903; B.N.N.R., Nos. 10 & 19 respectively.
  3. Hewett's Note - 28 Aug. 1902; N.T.C.I., op.cit., paras. 15 & 16.

who had experienced the difficulty of administering Sambalpur when he was the Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces, recommended the incorporation in Orissa not only of the Madras tracts but also of Sambalpur district with its Feudatory States. He believed that the Governments of Madras and the Central Provinces could not administer the areas efficiently.<sup>1</sup> Ibbetson's reasoning was different. He suggested that the Agency Tracts of Ganjam and Vizagapatam and the Feudatory States of Orissa should be amalgamated with the Central Provinces and the Ganjam district should be joined to Bengal. Ibbetson's proposal was a compromise. The Oriyas, instead of being governed by three administrations, would be administered by two. Bengal would control the "true Uriyas" of the plain districts of Orissa and Ganjam proper, and the Central Provinces would have the Oriyas of "aboriginal descent" living in the Ganjam and Vizagapatam Agency Tracts. Sambalpur was however, to remain with the Central Provinces.<sup>2</sup>

Curzon did not agree with Ibbetson's proposal. To him it was a "patchwork administration", based on consideration of race (dividing the "true Oriyas" from the Oriyas of primitive descent) rather than of language. It would have divided the Oriyas of the Ganjam district from their kinsmen of the Agency Tracts. Likewise, the Oriyas of the plains would have been separated from the Oriyas of the Feudatory States. In Curzon's view what the Oriyas desired was not to be transferred from one charge or to be added to another but to be "welded by the link of language into a single administrative whole."<sup>3</sup> The transfer of the Feudatory States of Orissa and the primitive Oriyas of Madras to the Central Provinces would still not create a large enough Oriya-speaking unit (under British territory) to end the kind of administrative difficulties that

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1. Fraser's Note - 28 March 1903; Ibid., para.17.

2. Ibbetson's Note - 23 April 1903; ~~Fraser's Note~~, op.cit., paras. 59-67.

3. Curzon's Minute - 1 June 1903; Ibid., paras. 33-4.

had been experienced in staffing the Sambalpur district both before and after the restoration of Oriya as the official language.<sup>1</sup> Curzon therefore proposed to bring all the Oriyas under the charge of Bengal. This he thought would relieve the Central Provinces and Madras "of a troublesome excrescence upon their administrative system".<sup>2</sup> He did not think it advisable to create a separate Chief Commissionership for the tracts as they would not have constituted a sufficiently large area for a separate administration.<sup>3</sup>

The Chota Nagpur division consisted of the five British districts of Hazaribagh, Ranchi, Palamau, Manbhum and Singhbhum and a number of Tributary Mahals governed by native chiefs.

The officials proposed the transfer of the division to the Central Provinces. They thought that the division had been neglected by the Bengal Government in the past; its primitive people were similar to the inhabitants of the Central Provinces and at a like stage of development. The highly legalised system of the Bengal Government was not thought to suit a backward area like Chota Nagpur.<sup>4</sup> Curzon agreed with the recommendations of his officials and proposed the transfer of

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1. Fraser as cited by Curzon in his Minute of 1 June 1903; Ibid., para.34(iv). Fraser advised that the Sambalpur district minus the zamindaris of Phuljar and Chandarpur (being more Hindi than Oriya) and its states, i.e. Bamra, Rehrakhol, Sonpur, Patna and Kalahandi should be transferred to Orissa.
  2. Curzon's Minute - 1 June 1903; N.T.C.I., op.cit., para.35.
  3. Ibid., para.38.
  4. Hewett and Ibbetson wanted to retain Hazaribagh and Manbhum with Bengal on account of the coal-fields. Fraser suggested the transfer of the division without any "enthusiasm" as it would deprive Bengal of some of its best districts from the point of view of climate. See Hewett's Note of 28 Aug. 1902; para.13; Fraser's Note of 28 March 1903; paras. 16-7; and Ibbetson's Note of 23 April 1903; Ibid., paras. 27, 48 & 50.



Chota Nagpur to the Central Provinces with the exclusion of the Manbhum and Singhbhum districts.<sup>1</sup>

The discussion of the fate of the eastern districts of Bengal and of Assam was only a continuation of the unsolved issue of Bengal's over-extended boundaries. The officials thought that the curtailment of Bengal's boundaries would reduce the administrative burdens of the government and its Lieutenant-Governor would be able to pay due attention to the problems and needs of the province.<sup>2</sup> The transfer of the Chittagong Division with an area of 11,773 square miles and a population of 4,737,731 was thought, to quote Fraser, to be

"expedient in the interests of Chittagong, to be practically necessary in the interests of sound administration in Bengal, and to be practically necessary with the view to making Assam large enough for efficient administration." 3

Assam with an area of 56,243 square miles (52,959 in British territory) and a population of 6,126,343 (5,841,878 in British territory) was relatively small and undeveloped. Its land revenue and rates amounted to Rs.68,29,874 and its gross revenue was only Rs.1,28,43,241. With a revenue lower than the Central Provinces or Sind, Assam was unable to cater for its own services. It depended on officers lent to her by Bengal who after completing their tour of duty returned to Bengal. Since salaries in Assam were lower than in Bengal and the chances of promotion limited, there was little attraction for Bengal officers to go to Assam. The result was that Assam did

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1. Curzon's Minute - 1 June 1903; Ibid., para.25. Curzon proposed to retain Singhbhum with Bengal as it contained only 100,000 Oriya-speaking people out of a population of 613,000.
  2. See Hewett's Note of 28 Aug. 1902; para.17; Fraser's Note of 28 March 1903; para.18; Risley's Note of 31 March 1903; paras. 2-6; & Ibbetson's Note of 23 April 1903; paras.31-38. N.T.C.I., op.cit. Hewett proposed the transfer entirely on the material advantages which Assam would gain. He did not think that the transfer would lighten the burden of the government.
  3. Fraser's Note - 28 March 1903; op.cit., para.18.

not receive the best men from Bengal and suffered in consequence. It was thought that with an enlarged province there was every prospect of Assam having independent services.

The addition of the Chittagong Division was also considered to be materially advantageous. The Assam-Bengal Railway begun in 1891 was to be completed shortly, and would connect the tea-plantations of the Upper Brahmaputra and the coal mines of Margharita with access to the sea at Chittagong. The Railway was to open new avenues for the exploitation of the material resources of Assam, but its success depended on increased trade which could only be developed through an improved port such as Chittagong might become. Hitherto very little had been done by the Bengal Government to improve the port of Chittagong and it was hoped that the port would fare better under Assam than as a competitor of Calcutta within Bengal.<sup>1</sup>

With the above benefits in mind, Fuller, Fraser, Risley<sup>2</sup> and Ibbetson recommended the transfer of the Chittagong Division. Fraser went further and suggested that the Dacca and Mymensingh districts should also be transferred. Fraser had found administration defective in the two districts and the educated classes which were troublesome. He believed that Eastern Bengal "would cease to be so painful a factor in the Bengal

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1. Chief Comm. Assam to Govt. of India - 30 Jan. 1903; paras. 4, 6, 11 & 12; Fraser's Note - 28 March 1903; para. 18; Risley's Note - 31 March 1903; paras. 2-6; Ibbetson's Note - 23 April 1903; paras. 33-45., N.T.C.I., op.cit. Fuller also argued that "in language and race and religion" the people of the Surma Valley resembled the people of Chittagong, Tippera and Noakhali and that the Chittagong Hill Tracts had common features with the Lushai Hills. Ibbetson thought that the transfer would put the Chittagong Hill Tracts, Hill Tippera and the Lushai Hills under one administration and thus facilitate the pursuit of military policy on the eastern frontier. For details of the disadvantages under which the Assam officers suffered see Fuller's Note on Assam Commission Encl. in Fuller's to Miller - 5 April 1904; C.C., Vol. 209.
  2. At this time H.H. Risley was Census Commr. He was appointed Sec. Home Dept., Govt. of India in Sept. 1902, temporary member of Gov.-Gen.'s Council, 1909 & Sec. J.&P. Dept., India Office in March 1910.

administration" if the districts were amalgamated with Assam.<sup>1</sup>

Thus Fraser was responsible for adding political considerations for the change. He conveyed the impression to Ibbetson that these districts were closely associated with Calcutta which was the centre of political activity and exercised undue influence on the politics of Bengal. To Fraser it was an "object of great political and administrative importance to diminish this influence by separating one of its great centres from the others."<sup>2</sup>

Fraser's approach to the transfer of Dacca and Mymensingh was different from that of Fuller. Fraser advocated their severance as he thought the districts were politically too powerful to be allowed to remain with Bengal. He wanted to get rid of them in order to eliminate what he considered to be "elements of weakness and dissension" and hoped that it would be of advantage to curtail their influence in Bengal politics by transferring them to Assam.<sup>3</sup> Fuller thought that the addition of the Dacca and Mymensingh districts with an area of 9,114 square miles and a population of 6,564,590 could have administrative and material advantages for Assam. But because of the large European population engaged in business in Assam, Fuller believed that Assam had "something of the character of a British colony", and the incorporation of the two districts would overshadow the interests of Assam itself. The transfer would in fact be an annexation of Assam to Eastern Bengal rather than the amalgamation of East Bengal with Assam. He was not "decidedly" against their incorporation but strongly favoured the addition of the Chittagong Division alone.<sup>4</sup>

To Curzon "the reinvigoration of Assam and the relief of Bengal" were paramount considerations in redistributing the

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1. Fraser's Note - 28 March 1903; N.T.C.I., op.cit., para.18.

2. Fraser as cited by Ibbetson in his note of 23 April 1903; Ibid., para.44.

3. Fraser as cited by Curzon in his Minute of 1 June 1903; Ibid., para.47(iv).

4. Chief Commr., Assam to Govt. of India - 30 Jan. 1903; Ibid.. Also see Ibbetson's Note - 23 April 1903; Ibid., para.43.

boundaries of Bengal. Curzon attributed Assam's backwardness to

"its contracted area, to its restricted opportunities, to its lack of commercial outlet, to its alien services, and to the unhealthy predominance in its life and administration of a single industrial interest depending in the main upon imported labour." 1

With "a service and a career of its own" Assam would be converted into a vigorous administration capable of playing an important part on the North-East Frontier. Curzon who had earlier denied a port to the Punjab because of the Punjab's lack of experience of maritime trade now held that the commercial and economic interests of Assam were bound up with the future development of Chittagong port. He argued that Chittagong had been unable to arouse the interest of the local government in the past and had therefore remained in an "anaemic condition". This he hoped could be easily remedied once Chittagong had become part of an Assam - as Assam would be directly involved in its development and welfare.<sup>2</sup>

Curzon regarded a "self contained and independent" service as the secret of efficient administration. To furnish this a province with adequate territory and population was required. Could it be achieved in Assam as a result of the transfer of the Chittagong Division alone? In 1897 Cotton had pointed out that Assam could not afford independent services even if the Chittagong Division were added to it. Moreover in 1897 no addition of territories to Bengal was proposed, whereas Curzon at the present moment was suggesting the transfer to Bengal of some four and a half million Oriya-speaking people. The subtraction of Chota Nagpur (with a population of four million) and the Chittagong Division (with a population of five million) after the addition of the Oriyas would have the result of reducing the population of Bengal by only four and

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1. Curzon's Minute - 1 June 1903; Ibid., para.42(i).

2. Ibid., para.42.

a quarter million, even less than had been proposed in 1896. Thus to transfer the Chittagong Division alone, would neither confer a "boon" on Assam nor relieve Bengal of its weight of responsibility.<sup>1</sup> But with the transfer of the Dacca and Mymensingh districts as well as the Chittagong Division, Bengal's population would be reduced by eleven million and Assam's increased to nearly eighteen million. Thus with an increased territory and population, Assam would be big enough to have three separate commissionerships as against one and these "prize appointments" would be a lure to attract the best officers to the province.<sup>2</sup>

In recommending the transfer of the eastern districts of Bengal to Assam, one of Curzon's aims was also to deprive Assam of its "too exclusively European character". As against Fuller, who regarded Assam as a kind of British colony and who had indeed offered a solution giving primary importance to the interests of the tea planters, Curzon believed that the addition of a larger area would develop a variety of interests in Assam and thus reduce the influence of the tea-planter. Curzon wrote:

"I hold most strongly to the view that the tea-planting industry of Assam, which is under quite inadequate control, which dominates the entire districts where it has established itself, and which is rapidly developing a state of relations between the employers and their coolies that is fraught with serious danger to the public interest -- should be reduced to its proper place and perspective in the administration of Assam..."<sup>3</sup>

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1. Curzon's Minute - 1 June 1903; Ibid., para.45. It is clear from Curzon's minute that he had made the transfer of all the Oriya-speaking tracts to Bengal conditional on the transfer of the Dacca and Mymensingh districts to Assam, as he wrote, "... I propose to make up for this relatively small addition (Oriya-speaking tracts of Madras and the Central Provinces) by the subtractions of a very much larger area with very much heavier responsibilities, in Dacca and Mymensingh. If the latter areas are withdrawn from Bengal, I do not think that the enlargement of Orissa will matter much. On the other hand, if Dacca and Mymensingh are not withdrawn then I fear that I may have to desist from the present scheme..." Ibid., para.36.

2. Ibid., para.47.

3. Ibid., paras. 40 & 48(iii).

Thus far Curzon had dealt with the question as an administrative problem, but when he found that Fraser had injected a political element in the discussions, he responded favourably. Fraser was able to convince Curzon that

"the advantage of severing these Eastern districts of Bengal which are a hotbed of the purely Bengali movement, unfriendly if not seditious in character, and dominating the whole tone of Bengal administration will immeasurably outweigh any possible drawbacks."

Fraser had urged the separation of the two districts from Bengal not only because of "the character of the educated section of their inhabitants", but also because of his conviction that "nowhere in India are the officers of Government more ignorant of, or more divorced from the people".<sup>1</sup>

Curzon gave additional reasons for the transfer of the two districts; the addition of Chittagong Division and Dacca and Mymensingh districts would give the new province a well defined boundary. If Chittagong Division were transferred to Assam and Dacca and Mymensingh remained with Bengal, they would

"constitute a projection from the main body of Bengal obstruding itself into the heart of Assam, from which they would be separated by no other ties either of origin, language, religion, or administration".

Moreover, under the new arrangement Chittagong would serve as the main port not only of Assam but also of the two districts, which were famous for their jute and rice.<sup>2</sup> Curzon who had previously argued the retention of Sind with Bombay and of Orissa with Bengal due to the historic associations of the respective tracts denied the same benefit to the eastern

1. Ibid., para.47(iv).

2. Ibid., para.47. It seems that Curzon was eager to give an impetus to jute industry. He hoped that before long the jute industry of East Bengal would seriously imperil Dundee. See Curzon to Brodrick - 23 Feb. 1904; C.C., Vol.163.

districts of Bengal which also had long associations with Calcutta. He admitted their connection, but cynically pronounced it "arbitrary and unnatural", because of the many intervening rivers.<sup>1</sup>

In previous considerations of the possible transfer of Bengal areas to Assam, it had been argued that the tracts would be transferred from an advanced administration to a backward one; that their inhabitants would lose the privileges of the High Court, Board of Revenue and the Bengal Legislative Council. Curzon examined the objections and observed that since no alteration was contemplated in the existing laws by which the Bengal districts were governed, the apprehensions were groundless. The jurisdiction of the High Court was to continue. He thought that a Chief Commissioner with experience in revenue administration would be able to handle revenue matters without difficulty. Finally he suggested the grant of a seat on the Governor-General's Legislative Council as compensation for the loss of representation on the Bengal Council.<sup>2</sup>

Curzon attached more importance to the objectives of the scheme than to the opposition against it. He was certain that the proposal of severing the Dacca and Mymensingh districts would be "resisted with all the energy and eloquence that Eastern Bengal and the Bengali press in general" had to offer. He knew that the transfer would be represented by the educated classes as a retrogressive step. He was convinced that the local zamindars with their connections in Calcutta would be opposed to the change. But he hoped that the opposition would

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1. Curzon's Minute - 1 June 1903; N.T.C.I., op.cit., para.47.

2. Ibid., para.43. Fuller had also suggested that the laws governing the Bengal territories should be retained and representation provided on the Imperial Legislative Council. See Chief Commr. Assam to Govt. of India - 30 Jan. 1903; Ibid., paras. 7 & 9.

soon dwindle away.<sup>1</sup> In this view he was strengthened by the report from James Bourdillon, the acting Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, that local feeling about the transfer of the Chittagong Division, previously hostile, was now favourable.<sup>2</sup> Curzon was, however, prepared to take into account any suggestions to be offered and therefore invited the opinions of Hewett, Bourdillon and Fuller once again.<sup>3</sup> His own desire not to impose a scheme arbitrarily is borne out by his letter to Hewett in which he wrote:

"There will be considerable outcry in some quarters, and our proposals may have to undergo modifications."<sup>4</sup>

Curzon's Minute of 1 June 1903, recommending territorial redistribution was accepted by all the members of his Council.<sup>5</sup> A.T. Arundel and E.F.Law, however, disputed the advisability of the transfer of the Oriya tracts of Madras. Arundel thought that the chiefs and zamindars of the areas would be put to

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1. Curzon's Minute - 1 June 1903; N.T.C.I., op.cit., para.48(i). Hewett expected that the opposition to the transfer of the Chittagong Division would be much greater now than in 1874, but believed that the people would probably be reconciled to the change. See Hewett's Note - 28 Aug. 1903; Ibid., para. 17. Risley thought that the objections to the transfer would disappear with the increasing prosperity of the territory and that "we should not be deterred from carrying it out by the opposition of Calcutta middlemen any more than by that of pleaders and schoolmasters in Chittagong". See Risley's note - 31 March 1903; Ibid., para.6. Also see Ibbetson's Note - 23 April 1903; Ibid., p.38.
  2. Bourdillon to Curzon - 22 May 1903; C.C., Vol.207. In April 1903, Bourdillon had gone to Chittagong to ascertain public feeling about the proposed change and had been presented an address by the Chittagong District Board asking for the transfer of the Division to Assam. See the Jyoti (Chittagong) - 16 April 1903; B.N.N.R., No.17.
  3. Curzon to Hewett - 29 May 1903; Curzon to Bourdillon - 1 June 1903; C.C., Vol.207 and Curzon to Fuller - 8 Oct. 1903; Ibid., Vol.208.
  4. Curzon to Hewett - 7 Aug. 1903; Ibid.
  5. Lord Kitchener, T.R. Raleigh, A.T. Arundel, E.R.Elles, E.F.Law, and D.C.J. Ibbetson.



great inconvenience on account of their severance from an administration with which they had been connected for over a century. He did not attach any importance to the memorial submitted by the people of Ganjam asking for the transfer and doubted the genuineness of the signatures.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, he felt that the political union of the Oriyas was ominous and would result in "trouble and unrest" for he regarded the Oriyas of Ganjam and Vizagapatam of "warlike and turbulent disposition". He therefore asked

"Why should we place them in political union with the Uriyas of Orissa and create the risk of a rising or of outrage in response to the wire-pullers in that province?"<sup>2</sup>

Arundel favoured the transfer of the Chittagong Division but was not sure about the amalgamation of Dacca and Mymensingh.<sup>3</sup>

Curzon was not impressed. He did not think that the Oriyas were a

"formidable body of men, with pronounced political aspirations and capable of being a thorn in the side of the Government like the Bengalis on one side and the Marathas on the other."<sup>4</sup>

1. See above, pp. 65-6.
2. Arundel's Note - 19 June 1903; N.T.C.I., op.cit., paras. 3, 5-10. Arundel had drawn his conclusions from certain disturbances which had taken place in Vizagapatam in 1879-81. Again in 1900, a religious fanatic had caused serious trouble in that area. Law though in favour of the transfer of Sambalpur, opposed the addition of the Madras tracts on political grounds. See Law's Note - 22 June 1903; Ibid., pp. 82-3.
3. Arundel did not think the arguments for the transfer of Dacca and Mymensingh were conclusive but he was impressed with the political reasons for their separation which were similar to those which assigned Berar to the Central Provinces and which led him to demur at the political union of the Oriyas. See Arundel's Note - 19 June 1903; Ibid., p. 81.
4. Curzon's Note - 28 June 1903; Ibid., p. 83. Ibbetson also disagreed with Arundel and thought that the risings referred to by Arundel were of a local nature. See Ibbetson's Note - 19 June 1903; Ibid., para. 12.

Bourdillon, though prepared for the transfer of Chittagong Division, was not inclined to add Dacca and Mymensingh.<sup>1</sup> Bourdillon admitted that the responsibilities of governing Bengal were heavy and yet he observed

"We are proud of the burden and of the importance and magnitude of our province and do not shrink from the labour." 2

Curzon described this as an expression of excessive provincial loyalty.<sup>3</sup>

On 10 July 1903, the Council accepted Curzon's scheme and it was decided to circularise the local governments and to address the Secretary of State. Risley prepared the draft of the despatch. This Curzon thoroughly revised, observing,

"if the letter to Bengal were published in its present form it would create absolute consternation and would effectually defeat the very end that we have in view.... What I could say in the privacy of the Council Chamber is not necessarily suitable for proclamation on the house-tops. Secretary [sic] in his anxiety to respect the form as well as the substance of what I wrote has produced a draft which even my knowledge of Bengal - so much less than his - is sufficient to tell me would be disastrous." 4

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1. Curzon's Note - 28 June 1903; Ibid., p.83.
  2. Bourdillon to Curzon - 21 June 1903; C.C., Vol.207.
  3. Curzon's Note - 28 June 1903; op.cit., Curzon took Arundel's opposition to the separation of Madras area in the same light.
  4. Curzon's Note - 10 Nov. 1903; N.T.C.I., op.cit., Risley's draft is not available.

### Chapter III

#### Public Reaction and Official Response

Throughout the lengthy discussions leading up to the submission of his plans to the Home Authorities on 3 December 1903, Curzon had been conscious that any scheme he propounded would necessarily be the subject of much criticism. He was well aware of the public and official outcry which had been raised against earlier schemes, such as the proposals to transfer Sylhet to Assam, to amalgamate Oudh with the North-West Provinces, or to sever Sind from Bombay. He had already had a taste of Bengali opposition to the current proposals, and expected more. Nor did he expect his scheme to emerge unscathed from its review by the governments of Madras, Assam and Bengal. Indeed Curzon did not expect his draft plans to be a final pronouncement on the problem. They were set out for examination and discussion, in the expectation that they would require modification in the light of criticism, whether from the politically conscious and vocal public, or by governments and their officials. It will be the purpose of this chapter, therefore, to consider the nature of the objections raised to Curzon's plans.

The first public comment had been heard even before the plans had been despatched, and in the last months of 1903 and early months of 1904 the chorus of criticism swelled. A free press and the spread of education and of Western ideas had all contributed to a new mood of militant criticism of the Government. News of the plans called forth a very full deployment of the arguments against the plans, legal, administrative, political and economic - and no less embarrassing exposure of the inconsistencies in the arguments put forward in their support.

One inconsistency was seized upon in a memorial from residents of Tippera pointing out that if it was essential by the transfer of Chittagong, Dacca and Mymensingh, to reduce the

administrative area of Bengal, it was scarcely sensible at the same time to add to Bengal territories from Madras and the Central Provinces.<sup>1</sup> Residents of Mymensingh argued that a reduction of eleven and a half million would not greatly lighten the administrative burdens,<sup>2</sup> while the Bengal National Chamber of Commerce stressed that the natural increase of population would replace the loss of population and pose the whole problem anew.<sup>3</sup> Peary Mohun Mookerjee, Raja of Uttarpur, submitted a memorial as Chairman of a public meeting held under the auspices of the British Indian Association at the Calcutta Town Hall on 18 March 1904. He made the further point that improved instruments of administration, such as the railways and telegraph, were already making it possible to deal effectively with larger numbers.<sup>4</sup>

The Charu Mihir seized upon another contradiction to argue that if the Oriyas could claim to be united under one administration because of their common language, Bengalis could rightly oppose the severance of the linguistic and cultural ties which bound together the people of West and East Bengal.<sup>5</sup> The Dacca Prakash applied the argument of geographical unity, used to justify the retention of Singhbhum, Hazaribagh and Manbhum in Bengal, to oppose the proposed separation of the eastern districts.<sup>6</sup> The Dacca Gazette, in like manner pointed out that if the difficulty of breaking "the prescription of a century" and the "strong feeling on the part of the educated and commercial classes", had been accepted as a good reason

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1. Memorial from the residents of Tippera to Viceroy - Jan. 1904; P.L., 1905, Vol.33, Encl.13 of Encl.5, para.18.
  2. Residents of Mymensingh to Govt. of Bengal - n.d., Ibid., Enc. 9 of Encl. 5, para.17. Also see Basu, C.N., The Partition Riddle, Tract 1048, p.5.
  3. Hon. Sec. Bengal National Chamber of Commerce to Govt. of Bengal - 3 Feb. 1904; P.L., 1905, Encl. 4 of Encl. 5, para.3.
  4. Peary Mohun Mookerjee to Govt. of India - 5 Oct. 1904; Ibid., Encl. 16, paras. 35-8.
  5. The Charu Mihir (Mymensingh) - 15 Dec. 1903; B.N.N.R., No.52.
  6. The Dacca Prakash - 20 Dec. 1903; Ibid.

for not removing Orissa from Bengal, then the same classes could surely object to any loss of the eastern districts.<sup>1</sup> Ever since the establishment of the British rule, Bengal had been treated as one, under a single authority, a common legal system and common code of laws.<sup>2</sup> The Sri Sri Vishnu Priya-o-Ananda Bazar Patrika, noting the Government's argument that Chota Nagpur should be transferred to the Central Provinces because the Bengal administration was "too highly developed, too legalised and too impersonal for backward tracts", asked why then should the culturally advanced districts of Dacca and Mymensingh be transferred to undeveloped Assam, with its many non-scheduled tracts inhabited by primitive tribes?<sup>3</sup> Even the trivial absurdities were seized upon: Government had held that Dacca and Mymensingh, if not transferred, would "constitute a projection from the main body of Bengal obtruding itself into the heart of Assam". But, asked the Dacca Gazette, would not the Oriya tracts from Madras and the Central Provinces thrust themselves, likewise, into the heart of Bengal?<sup>4</sup>

The Bengali critics of the scheme were not content with exposing illogicalities in the arguments put forward by Government in its support, but went on to impugn the motives behind it. Certain newspapers, for example, asserted that the enlargement of Assam was designed to create a strong North-Eastern Frontier as a base for a "forward" policy towards Tibet. This paralleled the creation of the North-Western Frontier Province as a base for Government pressure on Afghanistan and Persia.<sup>5</sup>

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1. The Dacca Gazette - 28 Dec. 1903; B.N.N.R., No.1 of 1904.

2. The Case Against the Break-up of Bengal, Tract 1037, Appendix F.

3. The Sri Sri Vishnu Priya-o-Ananda Bazar Patrika - 30 Dec. 1903; B.N.N.R., No.2. Also see Hon. Secs., Bengal Landholders' Association to Govt. of Bengal - 1 March 1904; P.L., 1905, Encl. 6 of Encl. 5, para.26.

4. The Dacca Gazette - 28 Dec. 1903; B.N.N.R., No.1 of 1904.

5. The Hindoo Patriot (Calcutta) - 15 Dec. 1903, and the Sanjivani (Calcutta) - 31 Dec. 1903; Ibid., No.2 of 1904.

The Bengalee of 21 January 1904, which saw this as the dominating idea of the scheme, feared that the executive of such an administration would be unfettered by law and tempted to adopt measures not ordinarily permissible under the authority of a Lieutenant-Governor. Another accusation was that the scheme had been devised for the benefit of the powerful European tea-planting interests in Assam. The Bengalee and the Amrita Bazar Patrika believed that the object was to provide British capitalists in Assam with a port through which they could more easily export tea and exploit Assam's resources for their own benefit.<sup>1</sup> Peary Mohun Mookerjee elaborated this point, arguing that Government intended that Assam's lack for funds for development should be remedied by utilising the revenues of the eastern districts. The memorial stated that

"The net revenue of Dacca, Mymensingh, Chittagong, Tippera and Noakhali is now spent for the benefit of these Districts of Bengal. If they are transferred to Assam, the latter will swallow up all this revenue, ... leaving nothing for Dacca and Mymensingh, and depriving Bengal of what it has hitherto enjoyed." 2

The critics imputed to the Government the wish to weaken the "Bengali nation" politically by placing it under two administrations.<sup>3</sup> The Indian Nation perceived that "considerations as to the balance of power between provinces and nationalities" had prompted the Government to devise the scheme.<sup>4</sup> The Bengalee regarded the proposal as a fatal blow to the glory and solidarity of the Bengalis.<sup>5</sup> It observed that Curzon had adopted a series of measures to weaken the people

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1. The Bengalee - 10 Dec. 1903, and the Amrita Bazar Patrika (Calcutta) 26 Dec. 1903. Also see the memorial from the residents of Tippera to Viceroy - Jan. 1904; op.cit., para.12.
  2. Peary Mohun Mookerji to Govt. of India - 5 Oct. 1904; op.cit., para.22.
  3. The Amrita Bazar Patrika - 14 & 26 Dec. 1903; B.N.N.R., Nos. 51 of 1903 & 1 of 1904 respectively. Also see the Dacca Prakash - 27 Dec. 1903; Ibid., No.1 of 1904.
  4. The Indian Nation (Calcutta) - 1 Feb. 1904; Ibid., No.5.
  5. The Bengalee - 19 Dec. 1903.

of Bengal and now the partition scheme was intended to introduce a policy of divide and rule.<sup>1</sup> The memorials submitted to the Government also laid stress on the point that a homogeneous community would be divided and weakened as a result of the partition. One such memorial said:

"Mutual jealousies should not be created by dividing the people, rather they should be encouraged to preserve the same traditions, the same racial feeling, to cherish the same ideas, and be guided by the same aspirations."

The opponents of the scheme also brought forward objections, practical and sentimental, many of which had been aired when earlier plans for territorial redistribution had been made. A Dacca memorial, and the Bengal Landholders' Association protested against the apprehended removal of the eastern districts from the jurisdiction of the High Court and the Board of Revenue and those districts' loss of representation on the Legislative Council. Even though the Government had announced that the jurisdiction of the High Court over the severed districts would be retained, the critics feared that the Court would eventually be replaced by a tribunal with a consequent diminution of the protection to the people's rights. Similarly they thought that with the abolition of the Board of Revenue, land disputes would be decided by the Chief Commissioner in camera and that they would be deprived of the legal aid.<sup>2</sup>

As for the loss of representation on the Council, this was held to be the "total loss, to eleven million of people, of all voice" in matters concerning their interest. The alternative provision of a seat on the Legislative Council of the Governor-General, which had been suggested by the Government, was little compensation, since representation

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1. The Bengalee - 15 Jan. 2 April, & 27 Dec. 1904.

2. Hon. Secs., Bengal Landholders' Association to Govt. of Bengal - 1 March 1904; P.L., 1905, Encl. 6 of Encl. 5, paras. 10 & 23. Also see memorial from the inhabitants of Dacca - 4 March 1904; Ibid., Encl. 8 of Encl. 5, paras. 39-40.

in the Supreme Legislature would not give the people the chance to participate in framing local laws. They also contended that the laws in the new province might be changed or suspended and the transferred districts administered on the lines of non-regulation areas.<sup>1</sup> In addition the British Indian Association and the Bengal National Chamber of Commerce pointed out the pecuniary disadvantages accruing from the transfer.<sup>2</sup>

Another major objection to the scheme was that the educational interests of the transferred areas would be seriously jeopardised. The leaders alleged that Assam did not have an efficient education department; that the province was too poor to maintain and support institutions of higher education; and that since admissions to the medical, science and engineering institutions of Calcutta were limited, students from the transferred areas would be excluded.<sup>3</sup>

Another consequence, they feared, would be the restrictions of opportunities of employment for the people of eastern districts. Dacca supplied a large number of government employees, and was described as the "nursery for the public services".<sup>4</sup> Its babus were "found earning their livelihood throughout Bengal and Assam and even further afield".<sup>5</sup> Bikrampur, a sub-division of Dacca, supplied some of the best clerks to government offices. The memorial from the inhabitants of Dacca admitted that

"the people of Dacca alone held more than 1/10 of the posts of subordinate, judicial and executive services in the whole of Bengal besides ministerial appointments."

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1. Memorial from the inhabitants of Dacca - 4 March 1904; op. cit., paras.22-34, & Hons. Secs. Bengal Landholders' Association to Govt. of Bengal - 1 March 1904; op.cit., paras. 8-10.
  2. Hon. Sec. British Indian Association to Govt. of Bengal - 19 Feb. 1904; P.L., 1905, para.5, & Hon.Sec. Bengal National Chamber of Commerce - 3 Feb. 1904; op.cit., para.63.
  3. Ibid., para.35. Also see the Bengalee - 28 Feb. 1904.
  4. Commr. Orissa Division to Govt. of Bengal - 10 Feb. 1904; P.L., 1905, Encl. 22 of Encl. 5, para.8.
  5. Census of India, 1901, Bengal, Vol.VI, Part I, p.135.



The transfer of the two districts would greatly curtail such opportunities for employment.<sup>1</sup>

The Bengal Government tried to remove the fear that important privileges would be taken away.<sup>2</sup> Fraser met Bengali leaders and explained that the jurisdiction of the High Court would remain; that the laws would not be altered; that the Bengal districts would not be annexed to Assam but would form an important part of that province; that the province would not be known as Assam, and that the capital of the proposed administration would be located in one of the principal towns of East Bengal.<sup>3</sup> The same assurance was given by the Government of India and it was announced that there was no desire on the part of the Government to diminish or sacrifice the identity of the eastern districts by incorporating them with Assam. For this reason they suggested that the province should be called "The Eastern Provinces" or "The North-Eastern Province of India".<sup>4</sup> The Bengalee of 24 December 1903, published the clarification issued by the Government, but without much enthusiasm. The paper stated that a mere change in the name of the province would not make the proposals less objectionable. It asked:

"Are the people of Eastern Bengal so simple and unsophisticated as to be pacified by lollipops?"

If the specific assurances of the Bengal and Supreme Governments could be so lightly dismissed, that was clearly because Bengali objections were emotional as well as practical, cultural as well as material. Bengalis found the scheme retrogressive from the linguistic, social and religious points of

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1. Inhabitants of Dacca to Govt. of Bengal - 4 March 1904; op.cit., para.51. Also see Hon. Sec. Bengal National Chamber of Commerce to Govt. of Bengal - 3 Feb. 1904; op.cit., paras. 47-8.
  2. Fraser, A.H.L., op.cit., p.320. Also see the Bengalee - 24 Dec. 1903.
  3. Govt. of Bengal to Govt. of India - 21 Dec. 1903; P.L., 1905, L. No.5063, paras. 1-4.
  4. Govt. of India to Govt. of Bengal - 23 Dec. 1903; Ibid., L.No.3808, para.2.

view. They feared that their highly developed literary language would deteriorate through close association with what they called the "barbarous dialect" of the Assamese.<sup>1</sup> The Sanjivani observed:

"Deprived as its [Eastern Bengal's] people now will be of their colleagues and competitors in life, the path of their future progress would be beset with difficulties. The Mishmis and Khasias of Assam will henceforth be the colleagues and intelligent competitors of the people of East Bengal."<sup>2</sup>

Without Calcutta, "the centre of civilization" for Bengal, East Bengalis would lose all "incentive to progress".<sup>3</sup>

These apprehensions found an echo in the memorials submitted by public bodies. They represented that the merger of the Bengalis with "a people placed on a much lower plane of civilisation" would lower them "in the estimation of their brethren in other parts of India".<sup>4</sup> The memorial submitted by Peary Mohun Mookerjee, repeated the fears that the language of the Eastern districts would become unchaste.<sup>5</sup>

It was also stressed that the transfer would weaken the religious and social ties existing amongst the Hindus in Bengal. A memorial signed by Ananda Chandra Ray<sup>6</sup> stated that Dacca had been the seat of King Adisur who had invited the learned Brahmins and Kayasthas from Kanauj to settle there. The present Brahmins and Kayasthas were their descendants and formed "the gentry of Bengal". The Bengalis looked to them for guidance in religious and social matters. With the transfer of

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1. The Dacca Gazette - 28 Dec. 1903; B.N.N.R., No.1 of 1904. Also see the Charu Mihir - 20 Dec. 1903; Ibid., No.52 of 1903.

2. The Sanjivani - 13 July 1905. Ibid., No.29 of 1905.

3. Memorial from the Inhabitants of Dacca to Govt. of Bengal - 4 March 1904; op.cit., para.41.

4. Hon. Sec. Bengal National Chamber of Commerce to Govt. of Bengal - 3 Feb. 1904; op.cit., para.71. Also see memorial from residents of Tippera to Viceroy - Jan. 1904; op.cit., para.18.

5. Peary Mohun Mookerji to Govt. of India - 5 Oct. 1904; op.cit., para.44. It may be pointed out that almost all the arguments adduced in the numerous memorials against the scheme were similar.

6. President of Peoples' Association Dacca, Sec. Landholders' Association, Dacca, Pleader and Zamindar.

Dacca to Assam, the Hindu society of Bengal would be deprived of all connections with Dacca, once the seat of Hindu culture and traditions.<sup>1</sup> The Bengalis also pointed out that the marriages among the Hindus did not take place outside the territorial boundaries of a province. "A marriage", wrote the Secretary of the Bengal National Chamber of Commerce, "between an Orissa or Behar Brahmin or Kayastha boy and a Bengal Brahmin or Kayastha girl can never take place.... Even a Bengali or Orissa Brahmin would not take food cooked by a Behari or United Provinces Brahmin."<sup>2</sup> A further separation, according to the critics, would reduce opportunities of social contact and the Bengalis would "suffer nationally, linguistically, and socially by the proposed division."<sup>3</sup>

The role of sentiment in human affairs could not be brushed aside; indeed the Amrita Bazar Patrika declared that sentimental opposition to the scheme was the most important factor in the agitation.<sup>4</sup> The Sanjivani in later years argued that this was not surprising as even the Europeans attached importance to sentiment; the Stone of Scone was used for the coronation of English monarchs; the pens used by Wordsworth and Scott were preserved; and if the sight of the lark could bring tears to the eyes of English immigrants to Australia, the Bengalis were justified in opposing the scheme on the same

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1. Memorial from the inhabitants of Dacca - 4 March 1904. op. cit., para.44. To arouse the religious susceptibilities of the people it was said that the transfer would make the goddess Dhakeswari (goddess of Dacca) subservient to Kama-khya (goddess of Assam). A scene was enacted at the Sankranti festival at Dacca in which Vishu Narada was represented discussing the partition question with god Mahadev and other gods. See the Sanjivani of 21 April 1904; B.N.N.R., No.18.
  2. Hon. Sec. Bengal National Chamber of Commerce to Govt. of Bengal - 3 Feb. 1904; op.cit., para.31.
  3. Almost all the memorials on the subject stressed the argument. See memorial of Peary Mohun Mookerji, Encl. 16; para. 44. memorial from the residents of Mymensingh, Enc. 9; para.8 and memorial from the residents of Tippera, Encl.13 of Encl. 5, para. 18, P.L., 1905.
  4. The Amrita Bazar Patrika - 26 Dec. 1903; B.N.N.R., No.1 of 1904.

grounds. After all, the paper added, it was sentiment which prompted a soldier to lay down his life to save the national flag which otherwise was nothing but a "piece of rag".<sup>1</sup>

Sentiment - and prejudice - was therefore as largely appealed to as self-interest in the campaign which developed against the scheme in Bengal. Wild statements and excited declarations were made by the press. The proposal was described by the Sri Sri Vishnu Priya-o-Ananda Bazar Patrika as "a thunderbolt of destruction and a catastrophe as great as the earthquake of Lisbon or an eruption of Vesuvius".<sup>2</sup> The Prativasi declared the plan to be the outcome of a fit of madness in Curzon, like that which had prompted Muhammad bin Tughluq to change his capital to Deogir.<sup>3</sup> The Nava Yug saw Curzon changing the map of India so that a new "Geography of Curzonian India" might be written.<sup>4</sup> The Surhid would have preferred the abolition of the Indian National Congress to the transfer of the eastern districts.<sup>5</sup> To the Indian Mirror the transfer to Assam of a cultured people like the Bengalis, "replete with civilization and proud of their historical associations", was "worse than banishment for some heinous crime".<sup>6</sup> As R.S. Greenshields, Officiating Commissioner of Chittagong pointed out, Assam was "an ultima Thule" inhabited by savage tribes. For an educated Bengali to be called an Assamese was an insult, and sensational stories of Assam's tea-gardens were circulated, and the morality of Assamese women was assailed.<sup>7</sup> "To a Dacca man", wrote the Bengalee, "the very

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1. The Sanjivani - 13 July 1905; Ibid., No. 29 of 1905.
  2. The Sri Sri Priya-o-Ananda Bazar Patrika - 16 Dec. 1903; & the Charu Mihir - 15 Dec. 1903; Ibid., No. 52.
  3. The Prativasi (Calcutta) - 21 Dec. 1903; Ibid.
  4. The Nava Yug (Calcutta) - 20 Dec. 1903; Ibid., No. 1 of 1904.
  5. The Surhid (Noakhali) - 4 Jan. 1904; Ibid., No. 3.
  6. The Indian Mirror (Calcutta) - 17 Dec. 1903; Ibid., No. 51. Also see the Anusandhan (Calcutta) - 30 Jan. 1904; Ibid., No. 6.
  7. Greenshields to Govt. of Bengal - 9 Feb. 1904; P.L., 1905; Encl. 20 of Encl. 5, para. 7(iii). Also see Govt. of Bengal to Govt. of India - 6/22 April 1904; Ibid., para. 41.

thought that he is to cease to be a Bengalee and to become an Assamese, is little short of maddening".<sup>1</sup> The Dacca Prakash declared that contact with the "naked barbarians of Assam" was abhorred and that Bengali dismay at the transfer could only be compared with that which a Londoner would feel if transferred to the North of Scotland.<sup>2</sup> After such appeals to prejudice and hatred it is small wonder that there was popular feeling against Curzon's scheme expressed in memorials, petitions and public meetings.

Early in January 1904, the Bengalee claimed that neither the Ilbert Bill nor the Jury Notification had created such opposition as had been aroused by the partition proposal, and that people unused to agitation and political demonstration had joined in resistance to the scheme.<sup>3</sup> But this was not to be wondered at, for the newspapers had not been content with rousing popular feeling through their articles, but had taken the lead in appealing for protest meetings and for the submission of petitions to the Government.<sup>4</sup> Public meetings were held in both East and West Bengal. Committees were formed to further the movement of protest.<sup>5</sup> The Dacca Peoples' Association, under the direction of Babu Ananda Chandra Ray, decided to send agents to the mofussil to encourage agitation.<sup>6</sup> It was reported that Rs.20,000 had been raised in Calcutta to finance the agitation and that the same amount would be raised in Dacca.<sup>7</sup>

On 20 January 1904, the British Indian Association held

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1. The Bengalee - 13 Dec. 1903.
  2. The Dacca Prakash - 20 & 27 Dec. 1903. B.N.N.R., Nos. 52 of 1903 & 1 of 1904 respectively.
  3. The Bengalee - 3 & 14 Jan. 1904.
  4. The Amrita Bazar Patrika - 14 & 17 Dec. 1903; B.N.N.R., No.51; the Charu Mihir - 15 Dec. 1903; the Sanjivani - 17 Dec. 1903; The Indian Mirror - 21 Dec. 1903; Ibid. Also see the Bengalee - 13 Dec. 1903.
  5. The Bengalee - 17 Dec. 1903, and the Amrita Bazar Patrika - 21 Dec. 1903; B.N.N.R., No.52.
  6. The Dacca Prakash - 27 Dec. 1903; Ibid., No.1 of 1904.
  7. The Bangavasi (Calcutta) - 2 Jan. 1904; Ibid., No.2.

its first anti-partition conference under the chairmanship of Maharaja Sir Jotindra Mohan Tagore, a leading zamindar and public figure of Bengal.<sup>1</sup> The conference, attended, it was claimed, by representatives from all parts of Bengal, decided to hold a public meeting at Calcutta Town Hall on 12 February 1904, to appraise the Government of the views of the public.<sup>2</sup> Meanwhile the Mymensingh Association, under the guidance of its Secretary Anath Bandhu Guha, issued detailed instructions for organising the agitation. He warned the people of the danger that would befall them if the districts were transferred. Rumours and alarms were spread to excite the people. They were told that the Permanent Settlement would be abolished; their property would be taken away by the Government; revenue would be enhanced; people would be carried off to Assam and made to work as coolies in the tea gardens; no records of rights would be maintained; new taxes would be imposed; and even if a man's children and wife were taken away, there would be no legal remedy. These tactics secured an otherwise unheeding ear. The instructions issued by the association contained the form and substance of petitions, the method of securing signatures on memorials, a specimen of telegrams of protest and the names of the newspapers which would give publicity to opposition. The association urged the people to hold general meetings of protest, and issued specimen resolutions to be adopted at such meetings which after their adoption were to be sent to various newspapers.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Risley reported that the Maharaja had recently purchased lands in the eastern districts and feared that its value would go down. See Risley's Note - 7 Feb. 1904; N.R.P.B., op.cit., p.3.
2. The Indian Mirror - 19 Jan. 1904; B.N.N.R., No.4. Also see the Bengalee - 21 Jan. 1904.
3. Instructions relating to the protest against the transfer of Dacca and Mymensingh to Assam by Anath Bandhu Guha, Encl. in Magistrate of Mymensingh to Commr. Dacca Division - 5 Feb. 1904; P.L. 1905, Encl. 19 of Encl. 5, L.No.169 J. Also see Curzon's Speeches, Vol.III, pp.313-5 and the Bengalee - 20 Feb. 1904.

On 17 January 1904, demonstrations were held in Mymensingh with train fares provided free to those who desired to attend.<sup>1</sup> However, in view of the impending visit of Curzon to East Bengal, the public meeting organised by the British Indian Association and scheduled for 12 February 1904, was postponed till after his tour,<sup>2</sup> though the agitation and protests continued.

The newspapers and the memorials demanded that Bengal be raised to the status of a Governor's province.<sup>3</sup> They suspected that the Government was unwilling to give a Governor to Bengal because Calcutta was the seat of Imperial Government. "As two suns cannot shine in the same firmament, so Bengal cannot have a Governor and also remain the winter capital of the Viceroy."<sup>4</sup>

The demand for organic changes in the constitution of the Government was accompanied by suggestions to amalgamate Assam with Bengal. The papers asked to reannex Assam and pointed out that if Assam had remained a part of Bengal with Bengali as its language, the lot of the Assamese would have been better.<sup>5</sup> The Prativasi stated that the people would not oppose the transfer of Chittagong if Assam was made a Bengali-speaking province.<sup>6</sup>

Not only did the papers demand to make Assam a part of

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1. Thompson, Magistrate of Mymensingh to Commr. Dacca Division - 5 Feb. 1904; op.cit., para.8. Also see the Dacca Gazette - 11 Feb., 1904; B.N.N.R., No.7.
  2. The Amrita Bazar Patrika - 28 Jan. 1904; Ibid., No.5.
  3. The Sanjivani - 17 Dec. 1903; B.N.N.R., No.52, and the Bengalee - 15 & 17 Dec. 1903. Almost all the memorials asked this. See Hon. Sec. Bengal National Chamber of Commerce to Govt. of Bengal - 3 Feb. 1904; para.13, Hon. Sec. Central Muhammadan Association, Calcutta to Govt. of Bengal - 17 Feb. 1904; para.4. Hon. Secs. Bengal Landholders' Association to Govt. of Bengal - 1 March 1904; paras. 6 & 7, P.L., 1905.
  4. The Bengalee - 10 Dec. 1903.
  5. The Calcutta Weekly Notes (Calcutta) as cited by the Bengalee of 22 Dec. 1903; the East (Dacca) - 27 Dec. 1903, and 10 Jan. 1904; B.N.N.R., Nos. 1 & 3 of 1904 respectively. Also see the Sanjivani - 31 Dec. 1903; Ibid., No.2.
  6. The Prativasi - 21 Dec. 1903; Ibid., No.52.

Bengal, but proposed that if the Oriyas were to be placed under one administration, Orissa should remain a part of Bengal.<sup>1</sup>

The educated class of the Chota Nagpur Division opposed its transfer to the Central Provinces. They pointed out that Chota Nagpur was inaccessible from the Central Provinces; its mineral development was closely associated with Calcutta; it had permanently settled districts and its land tenure system was different from that prevailing in the Central Provinces. Moreover, on account of the backwardness of that province, they feared the loss of certain privileges which they enjoyed under the Bengal Government.<sup>2</sup> A few public meetings were held against the transfer and memorials were sent to the Government in favour of its continued union with Bengal.<sup>3</sup>

Oriya public opinion was opposed to the transfer of Orissa to the Central Provinces. The Oriya leaders feared the loss of such advantages as access to the High Court, and believed that their progress would be retarded if united with a backward administration. Meetings were held under the auspices of the Orissa Association demanding the union of all the Oriya-speaking people with Orissa. What the Oriya leaders sought was the raising of Orissa to a Chief Commissioner's province and desired that the connections with the Calcutta

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1. The Bengalee - 10 Dec. 1903. The Sec. of Bengal National Chamber of Commerce, however, suggested that Orissa should be transferred to the Central Provinces. The memorial from the inhabitants of Dacca also contained a proposal that Orissa and Chota Nagpur excluding Manbhum might be amalgamated with the Central Provinces. See Hon. Sec. Bengal National Chamber of Commerce to Govt. of Bengal - 3 Feb. 1904; para.14, and the Inhabitants of Dacca to Govt. of Bengal - 4 March 1904; para.61, and the Hon. Sec. Central Mahamadan Association to Govt. of Bengal - 17 Feb. 1904; para.3, P.L., 1905.
  2. Inhabitants of Hazaribagh to Govt. of Bengal (n.d.), P.L., 1905, Encl . 14 of Encl. 5, paras.4-5. Also see Pratap Udaya Nath Sahi Deo, Maharaja of Chota Nagpur to Govt. of Bengal - 12 Jan. 1904; Ibid., Encl . 15 of Encl. 5.
  3. The Bengalee - 14 & 15 Jan. 1904.



High Court and the University should be maintained.<sup>1</sup>

1. Sec. Orissa Association to Viceroy (n.d.), P.L., 1905, Encl. 16 of Encl. 5, paras. 8-20. Also see the Utkaldipka - 26 Dec. 1903, & 2 Jan. 1904; B.N.N.R., No. 2 of 1904. For some time past, Madhusudan Das, a Christian resident of Cuttack and President of the Orissa Association, had carried out a movement for bringing all the Oriya-speaking people under one administration. It was because the Oriyas were jealous of the monopoly which the Bengalis held in schools, the law courts and administrative posts. The Bengalis despised the Oriyas. Das, recalling his days at the Zilla School Cuttack, described the hatred with which the Bengalis regarded the Oriyas in the following words:

"My admission into the English school brought me into contact with Bengali boys and Bengali teachers... I was the target. All my Bengali class comrades everlastingly fired their volley of sarcasm and ridicule at me.... I had long hair which was tied at the back. This my Bengali friends considered a sign of my being a girl not a boy, for in Bengal by that time short-cropped hair was in fashion. One day one of my Bengali friends cut it off with a pair of sharp scissors... During the years of Bengali persecution at school, I looked back with a sigh, a regret sometime with tears, on the days I spent in my village before I was transported to Cuttack for English education. I thought of the days when I was loved, respected, and blessed as the scion of an old family of Zemindars. I was reconciled to a life where contempt and insult would be my share".

See Bailey, F.G., "The Oriya Movement", Economic Weekly, 26 Sept. 1959.

Even to this day the following saying survives in Bengal:

"Bangāl mōonish nākey Oriyā ek jantōe, laf dēy gāchey chadēy laj nai jantōe" - A Bangāl (a term of ridicule used for a resident of Eastern Bengal) is not a human being, an Oriya is an animal. They climb on trees like monkeys without tail.

In 1904, however, Madhusudan Das was against the transfer of Orissa to the Central Provinces for material reasons. Orissa and the Central Provinces were both poor, Bengal was rich. Das thought that the alliance of the richer province would benefit Orissa. As regards the domination by the Bengalis if Orissa remained a part of Bengal, Das wrote, "You cannot by any means keep away the Bengalis; there can be no legislation to keep them out of Orissa". But if transferred to the Central Provinces, "we shall have Bengalis all the same and the Mahratta who is a more astute administrator to boot". See correspondence between M.S. Das and Rev. George Howells - 26-28 Jan., 1904; P.L., 1905; Encl. 2 to Encl. 6.

The people of the Oriya-speaking tracts of Madras, however, opposed their transfer to Orissa. The memorial from the Oriyas and Telegus of the Ganjam district stated that hitherto they had lived side by side in perfect harmony and friendliness and had no cause for friction; unlike the Bengalis and Oriyas of Orissa, they joined together in religious and social ceremonies and made no distinction between the two peoples.<sup>1</sup> They contested the need to provide a separate administration based on linguistic considerations, observing that

"in a country where numerous languages are spoken and where the commixture of people speaking different languages is unavoidable",

it was impossible to have an administration for each linguistic area.<sup>2</sup> Besides, the change would involve administrative inconvenience to the people, since the laws of personal rights and land tenures, which had been framed with due regard to local conditions, would have to be altered under the new administration.<sup>3</sup>

The residents of Vizagapatam district for their part complained that the proposed scheme would put them under two administrations - the district would be under the Madras Government whereas its Agency Tracts would form part of Orissa. They argued that such dual control would be disastrous in its effects on both landlords and tenants.<sup>4</sup>

Even before the question of territorial adjustment was taken up by the Government, the people of Sambalpur had asked for the amalgamation of the district with Orissa. They now took the opportunity of endorsing the Government proposal. In a memorial they submitted that Sambalpur

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1. Memorial from the Oriyas and Telegus of Ganjam to Viceroy (n.d.) Ibid., Annexure 10 to Encl. 6, paras. 8 & 9.

2. Ibid., para.15.

3. Ibid., para.12.

4. Residents of Vizagapatam to Viceroy (n.d.), Ibid., Annexure 18 to Encl. 6, para.7.

"being detached from Orissa, the trunk of which it is a limb, is debarred from getting advantages which it would easily have done had it been a part and parcel of Orissa with which the district has a closer connection in matters, linguistic, social, moral and religious". 1

Public opinion in Assam was opposed to the amalgamation of the Bengal districts with the province, fearing that they would swamp Assam, which in effect would be annexed to eastern Bengal. The Assamese apprehended that their province would lose its identity, that the Bengalis would achieve a dominating position by virtue of their education and numbers, and that Assam would be "over-flooded with Dacca graduates and undergraduates", thus reducing the chances of appointments for the Assamese. They complained that the Bengalis looked down upon them as "the aborigin~~es~~es of India".<sup>2</sup> They protested against the ridicule and contempt with which the Bengali leaders and press had recently condemned them, their language and culture and pointed out that the Bengali argument about the backwardness of the Assamese

"so revolts against all common sense, and it so infringes every canon of decorum, that we wonder that it should have been used by people who profess to be the leaders of ... Congress. Indeed, it is impossible to conceive an argument more selfish, more narrow-minded, more dishonourable, or more dishonest". 3

They reminded the Bengalis that when the question of the recognition of the Assamese language was under consideration of the Government, the Bengalis had protested against it declaring that Assamese was "a mere jargon of Bengali" and that the two peoples did not differ in manners and customs.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Chandrashekhara Behara (Pleader) & others to Viceroy - 9 March 1904; Ibid., Encl. to Encl. 3, paras. 3-5.
  2. Note by Rai Dulal Chandra Deb, (Chairman, Sylhet Municipality & Govt. Pleader) - 22 March 1904; Ibid., Annexure 8 of Encl. 4, para. 4.
  3. Note by Manik Chandra Barua of Guhati - 27 Feb. 1904; Ibid., Annexure 7, Encl. 4.
  4. Ibid.

It was done for no other reason than to claim appointments in the services of Assam. But now,

"when the question of uniting a portion of Bengal with Assam has arisen, the Assamese language is declared to be an entirely different language and the Assamese people are relegated to the level of Lushais and other hill tribes." 1

In the circumstances, the Assamese opposed the union as it would result in greater friction and discord. At a public meeting held on 14 February 1904, under the Assam Association, at which various other branch associations were represented, resolutions against the proposed amalgamation were passed. The main theme of the resolutions was that the union would be against the interest of Assam, jeopardizing her future and eventually resulting in the obliteration of its historic name.<sup>2</sup>

The Assamese were therefore against the proposed scheme: but if it was to be carried out then they asked for certain guarantees from the Government to protect their interests. They suggested that eighty per cent of the posts in the new province be reserved for the Assamese; that the Vice-Chairman of the Local Boards in the Valley districts be either Assamese or European (not Bengali); and that educational opportunities for Assamese students be guaranteed and adequate representation on the Council reserved for them.<sup>3</sup>

Thus the arguments of the Assamese against the scheme were a direct counterpart to those of the Bengalis. The Bengalis opposed it because of their general contempt for the

1. Note by Jagannath Barua, President of Sarbajanik Sabha - 10 Feb. 1904; Ibid., Annexure 5 to Encl. 4.
2. Raja Probhat Chandra Barua (President, Assam Association) to Chief Commr. Assam - 15 Feb. 1904; Ibid., Annexure 4 to Encl. 4. The Dibrugarh Association was in favour of the transfer of Chittagong Division alone and the Gauripur Association that of Rangpur, Cooch Behar and Jalpaiguri. Also see, Kamni Kumar Chandra, (Pleader and Vice-Chairman, Silchar Municipal Committee) to Chief Commr. Assam - 31 March 1904; Ibid., Annexure 9 to Encl. 4.
3. Note by Manik Chandra Barua of Gauhati - 27 Feb. 1904; op. cit.

culture and language of the people of Assam, and because they objected to being placed under what they considered a backward administration. The Assamese opposed the scheme because they feared domination by the Bengalis and because they resented fiercely the contemptuous attitude of the people of Bengal.

By the close of 1903, Curzon's Government were very conscious of the opposition their proposals had aroused. "A prodigious outcry," wrote Curzon to Brodrick,

"is raised by all parties whom it is proposed to take away from Bengal, that they are being torn from the bosom of their ancestral mother, and that the act of spoliation is both a blunder and a crime." 1

And again on 28 January 1904,

"one almost begins to weary of attempting anything in the nature of a positive administrative reform in a country where a few people will ever look ahead, where public opinion is so unstable and ill informed, and where sentiment overrides almost every other consideration."

In all the objections put forward, Curzon found only "two or three propositions" which he could call arguments. Nevertheless as in October, he expressed his readiness to change a scheme which was in no sense cut and dried and to listen to different opinions about it:

"We are ourselves open to any reasonable argument, and I have very little doubt, before its final submission to you, that it will have been subjected to substantial modifications". 2

Meanwhile Curzon had decided to undertake a tour of East Bengal. In preparation of his tour, Risley and Ibbetson examined the criticism already voiced, and considered how

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1. Curzon to Brodrick - 31 Dec. 1903; C.C., Vol.162. Amthill also wrote to Brodrick about the strong feeling against the scheme in Bengal. See Amthill to Brodrick - 30 Jan. 1904; Amthill Collection, Vol.7/2.
  2. Curzon to Brodrick - 28 Jan. 1904; C.C., Vol.163.

these might be countered. In particular, Risley took note of the publication in the Bengalee, the Amritsar Bazar Patrika and the Sanjivani of Cotton's adverse minute, and the High Court Judges' opinions on the 1896 proposals both of which had been made much use of by critics of the present scheme.<sup>1</sup> Risley's Note of 7 February 1904, dealing with Cotton's objections and the Bengali criticism of the scheme became the basis for Curzon's speeches in East Bengal.<sup>2</sup> Risley argued that the agitation was being engineered by the educated minority for their own material ends and that they were trying to involve the mass of ordinary people so that the agitation would not seem to be a class movement. Melas (fairs) and religious festivals were being used to obtain signatures from the common people against the scheme.

Risley was prepared to admit that the administrative burden of Bengal could be reduced by providing an Executive Council. A Council would give relief and assistance to the Lieutenant-Governor, "give him more time to think, more time for touring", but it would also create dissensions. He thought that if the members of the Council were strong, they could out-vote the Lieutenant-Governor. "The Bengalis", he noted, "with their genius for intrigue would realise this possibility and find their own advantage and indulge their ruling instinct in stirring up strife and paralysing the executive". But he believed there were other more formidable objections to the proposition: that direct and personal methods of government were more suited to Indians; that the Council would be more costly than the proposed territorial change and that it would

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1. Miller to Risley - 30 Jan. 1904; Ibid., Vol.209. Cotton's Minute and the criticism of the High Court were produced by the Bengalee - 26 Jan. 1904; the Amrita Bazar Patrika - 27 Jan. 1904, and the Sanjivani - 28 Jan. 1904.
  2. Curzon in his speech at Chittagong criticised Cotton's views. See Curzon's Speeches, Vol.III, p.285. Also see the Bengalee - 17 Feb. 1904.

offer no solution to the problem of the development of Assam.<sup>1</sup>

As for the objection that the Bengalis would lose their national unity, Risley observed,

"This is the Congress point. Bengal united is a power; Bengal divided will pull several different ways. This is perfectly true and is one of the great merits of the scheme".<sup>2</sup>

This could not be said openly however. So Risley supplied Curzon with the different answer to this political objection,<sup>3</sup> that East Bengal needed room for expansion, to be given through joining it to Assam. Thus "far from hindering national development" the Government was providing Bengal with greater scope for it.<sup>3</sup>

To Ibbetson the reaction of the educated classes to the proposal was "natural and reasonable enough", but was mainly based on interested motives. He realised that the scheme had aroused a genuine and general alarm among the educated section of the province. But he believed this had been "procured by agitation and largely by misrepresentation", and therefore questioned whether the personal interests of a few should be allowed to stand against administrative considerations of importance.<sup>4</sup> He dismissed the idea that the people

1. Risley's Note - 7 Feb. 1904; N.R.P.B., C.C., Vol.247, p.5, paras. 2, 9-11. Curzon was also against the idea of a Governor and Council for Bengal. "Government by one man", he wrote to Brodrick, "is infinitely better than government by three men, if it can be managed. What we want in India is personal knowledge of localities and personal touch with the people. This can only be gained by the familiarity of the head of the administration with the places and people under his charge". Curzon to Brodrick - 28 Jan. 1904; C.C., Vol.163.

2. Risley's Note - 7 Feb. 1904; op.cit., p.3. para.4(v).

3. Ibid., para.5(v). Curzon in his speech at Mymensingh replying to the objection of national unity, said, "We offer to the Bengal nation the opportunity of forming a second unit round a second centre". See Curzon's Speeches, Vol.III, p.319.

4. Ibbetson's Note - 8 Feb. 1904; N.R.P.B., op.cit., p.6, paras. 2 & 3.

of Eastern Bengal would be deprived of educational opportunities and social contact with fellow Bengalis as absurd. However, he sympathised with their sense of grievance at losing representation on the Bengal Council and a share in the benefits of provincial legislation.<sup>1</sup>

Nor did Ibbetson brush aside the strength of feeling about the division of the "Bengali nation". He regarded this objection as sentimental, but entitled to respect. He realised that the Bengali leaders apprehended that the transfer would weaken their dominance in provincial politics. "But this 'preponderance', wrote Ibbetson, 'is an evil, and it is most desirable to diminish it. The arguments which told against including Nagpur and Poona under the same Government tell for separating Dacca from Calcutta".<sup>2</sup> Agitation notwithstanding, Ibbetson advised Curzon to proceed with the scheme:

"The need of Bengal for relief is great; but the need of Assam is still greater... It seems to me that the administrative necessities of the case are sufficient to justify us in overriding the opposition which our proposals have aroused." <sup>3</sup>

The line to be taken in answering the objections brought against the scheme on Curzon's forthcoming tour was discussed further at a meeting of the Viceroy's Council on 12 February 1904.<sup>4</sup> Another such meeting was held on 14 February to which Fraser was invited. It was at this meeting that Fraser suggested the transfer of the Faridpur and Backergunj districts, with the possibility of transferring a part of Pabna, in addition to the tracts already recommended. However, no decision was arrived at as to the precise area to be taken away from Bengal,<sup>5</sup> but agreement was reached on the form of Curzon's

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1. Ibid., paras. 4-6.

2. Ibid., p.7, para. 7.

3. Ibid., para.11.

4. Curzon's Note - 14 Feb. 1904; N.R.P.B., op.cit., p.8.

5. Hewett's Note - 9 Sept. 1904; Ibid. Also see Risley's Note - 1 Sept. 1904; Ibid., para.2.



reply to the general criticism of the scheme. Thus equipped, Curzon departed for East Bengal.

Curzon's visit to East Bengal had been preceded by the distribution of pamphlets and circulars against the scheme. Placards indicating indignation and distress at the proposed transfer were carried through the streets.<sup>1</sup> They bore slogans such as:- "Do not turn us into Assamese" and "Save us from Assam".

In his speeches Curzon replied to the objections against the original scheme and tried to remove popular apprehensions.<sup>2</sup> He admitted that some of the objections were reasonable and had some force but described others as illusory and mistaken. Referring to the claim that a part of Bengal was being ceded to Assam, Curzon said that the Government had proposed to transfer some eleven and a half million people to Assam, a province with a population of six million only, of which three million were already Bengalis. He asked how fourteen and a half million Bengalis could possibly be "absorbed, obliterated, and destroyed" by the tiny Assamese minority; how the Bengali majority in the new province could cease to be Bengalis and become Assamese; if it was conceivable that they would cease to use the Bengali language. He also reassured the people that in the new province the laws would not be changed, nor would their other privileges be affected.<sup>3</sup>

Curzon rejected the validity of the sentimental objection that the Bengali nation would be disrupted by the proposed transfer. "If a Scotchman crosses the Tweed and comes into England", he said, "he does not cease to be a Scotchman. If a Sikh comes to Bengal, he does not cease to be a Sikh. But here the case is not even one of crossing a border".<sup>4</sup>

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1. The Dacca Gazette - 8 Feb. 1904; B.N.N.R., No.7. Also see the Bengalee of 18 Feb. 1904.

2. The Charu Mihir - 8 March 1904; Ibid., No.12.

3. Curzon's Speeches, Vol.III, pp.300-2.

4. Ibid., pp.304-7. Also see Chuckerbutty, D.N., Partition of Bengal.( pamphlet) J. & P. Dept., File 1915, Vol.764 of 1906. This pamphlet brings out the advantages of the partition.

Curzon likewise refused to accept the argument that relief could best be given to Bengal by creating an Executive Council such as existed in Bombay and Madras. That arrangement was specially designed for those Presidencies because their governors were outsiders and needed the guidance of a Council. Moreover, a government with an Executive Council "would be a Government of divided and therefore weakened authority, of diffused and therefore diminished responsibility."<sup>1</sup>

During his tour in East Bengal, Curzon was presented with various addresses.<sup>2</sup> The address from the Muslim community of Dacca asked for the constitution of an enlarged province comprising Assam, the Dacca, Chittagong and Rajshahi Divisions with the exception of Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri and Cooch Behar and possibly including the districts of Jessore and Khulna from the Presidency Division.<sup>3</sup> The address from the District Board and Municipal Commissioners of Dacca also asked for the creation of a larger province with the Rajshahi Division included.<sup>4</sup> But the groups opposing the scheme were much more vocal and numerous than those in its favour.<sup>5</sup>

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1. Curzon's Speeches, Vol.III, p.297. This was Ibbetson's argument, Curzon slightly changed the wordings. See Ibbetson's Note of 8 Feb. 1904, N.R.P.B., op.cit.
  2. Certain newspapers alleged that the district authorities had prohibited any reference to partition in the addresses. This was untrue. See the Bengalee - 9 Feb. 1904; the Amrita Bazar Patrika - 12 Feb. 1904 and the Hindoo Patriot - 13 Feb.1904; B.N.N.R., No.7.
  3. On 11 Jan. 1904, the Nawab of Dacca invited a number of people and made the proposal. See the Dacca Prakash - 17 Jan. 1904; Ibid., No.4.
  4. Govt. of E.B.& A to Govt. of India - 12 Jan. 1907; J.& P. Dept., File 231, Vol.792 of 1907, No.291 T, para.11. A sub-committee consisting of the members of the District Board and Municipality of Dacca was duly elected for the presentation of the address. Three of the members, however, objected to the formation of the enlarged province. Their objection was overruled by the majority and they resigned their seats in protest. See the Dacca Prakash - 15 Feb. 1904; B.N.N.R., No.9. Also see the Bengalee - 15 Feb.1904.
  5. Besides the two addresses, other addresses presented to Curzon showed a dislike of any scheme of partition. See the Bengalee - 19 Feb. 1904.

Curzon, replying to the addresses, did no more than indicate that any larger scheme would deserve the attentive consideration of the Government. He said that any modification affecting Chota Nagpur and Orissa would not substantially reduce the population of Bengal and hence the need for a territorial readjustment towards Eastern Bengal would be all the more necessary. However, he explained that it was premature to discuss a suggestion for an enlarged scheme, as it had not been so far put before the Government of India, and he had no knowledge of any proposal to do so.<sup>1</sup>

It is not unlikely that Curzon, when he hinted at the possibility of a larger scheme, had been encouraged thereto by Brodrick, who had written to him on 29 January 1904,

"I suppose you have never contemplated cutting up Bengal, and making a new province, making the Bengal Government a smaller affair altogether".<sup>2</sup>

The more the scheme was examined in the light of the objections and criticism raised against it, the greater appeared the merits of its expansion in the direction indicated by Brodrick.<sup>3</sup> While in East Bengal, Curzon was impressed by the magnitude of the problems facing the Government of Bengal and communicated his impressions to Brodrick and pleaded for Bengal's dismemberment, noting:

"Bengal is an impossible task for any one man and one has only to go to the districts to realise what tenuity of administration means. The Bengalis, who like to think themselves a nation, and who dream of a future when the English will have been turned out, and a Bengali Babu will be installed in Government House, Calcutta, of course bitterly resent any disruption that will be likely to interfere with the realisation of this dream. If we are weak enough to yield to their clamour now, we shall not be able to dismember or reduce Bengal again; and you will be cementing and solidifying, on the eastern flank of India, a force already formidable, and certain to be a source of increasing trouble in the future." <sup>4</sup>

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1. Curzon's Speeches, Vol.III, pp.303-4.

2. Brodrick to Curzon - 29 Jan. 1904; C.C., Vol.163.

3. Curzon to Brodrick - 17 Feb. 1904; Ibid.

4. Ibid.

Curzon's speeches and the exposition of the methods adopted by the leaders of agitation displeased and annoyed the opponents of the scheme. They had hoped that it would be completely abandoned. But no reasoning, however sound, would have appealed to them. If it is true that Curzon's aim in coming to East Bengal was not to ascertain public opinion but to "overawe it" as Banerjea asserted,<sup>1</sup> or to bring the public round to his views as the newspapers stated,<sup>2</sup> it is equally true that the critics of the scheme were unreasonable and unfair in refusing to accept the assurances which Curzon gave,<sup>3</sup> in particular those concerning the change of laws, the utilisation of the East Bengal's public cesses for Assam, the abolition of the Permanent Settlement etc. This was the best card in the hands of the agitators and they continued to use it to excite the illiterate masses. At one point, however, Curzon showed a real lack of statesmanship, an error of judgement. This was in his speech at Dacca when, considering the future of the province, he said that partition would give

"to the people of these districts, by reason of their numerical strength and their superior culture, the preponderating voice in the province so created, which would invest the Mahomedans in Eastern Bengal with a unity which they have not enjoyed since the days of the old Musulman Viceroys and Kings,..."<sup>4</sup>

Inasmuch as his remarks looked to the growth of the Eastern districts they were harmless enough, but the appeal to the Muslims was taken as a bait offered to win their sympathies.<sup>5</sup> It was poor diplomacy to appeal to Muslim interests and traditions when the measure was being vehemently opposed by the Hindus of Bengal. Through his speech he put into the hands of his critics ammunition with which to continue their attack.

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1. Banerjea, op.cit., p.186.
  2. The Dacca Gazette - 29 Feb. 1904; B.N.N.R., No.10.
  3. The Bengalee - 28 Feb. 1904.
  4. Curzon's Speeches, Vol.III, p.303.
  5. Nevinson, H.W., The New Spirit in India, p.168.

Despite the criticism of the newspapers,<sup>1</sup> Curzon's tour and speeches seemed to have some effect. The large protest meeting held by the British Indian Association on 18 March 1904, though attended by great numbers and pronounced to be a "meeting of all Bengal"<sup>2</sup> did not carry quite the expected conviction. Resolutions were passed denouncing both the original and the enlarged partition schemes, and demanding that Bengal be made a Governorship with a Council.<sup>3</sup> A committee was formed to take appropriate measures against the measure.<sup>4</sup> But the Indian Mirror vehemently criticised Surendra Nath Banerjea. It complained that he had said practically nothing against the scheme and that his words had lacked substance. The paper described the speeches made at the meeting as "a declamation contest" and suggested that Banerjea should have "a meeting to himself at which he can indulge in his school-boyish vanity of winning applause by hysterical and overdrawn dithyrambics".<sup>5</sup>

Curzon had returned from East Bengal fully convinced that the scheme of 3 December was not large enough to afford appreciable relief to Bengal. A larger area needed to be separated from Bengal and made into a new province, with Assam appended to it. He found the case for a complete reform in the administration of Bengal even stronger than he had anticipated.<sup>6</sup>

Curzon wanted to take up the issue for discussion and possibly for final settlement on 12 April 1904.<sup>7</sup> He desired this

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1. The Sri Sri Vishnu Priya-Ananda Bazar Patrika - 2 March 1904; B.N.N.R., No.13 Also see the Charu Mihir of 23 Feb. 1904; Ibid.
  2. The Bengalee - 18 March 1904.
  3. Peary Mohun Mookerjee to Govt. of India - 5 Oct. 1904; P.L., 1905, Encl.16, Resolution No.3.
  4. The Bengalee - 19 March 1904. Only four members of a total of sixty-three were Muslims.
  5. The Indian Mirror - 21 March 1904; B.N.N.R., No.13. The Amrita Bazar Patrika of 21 March 1904 (Ibid., No.12) also criticised the proceedings. The Bengalee of 22 March 1904, however, published an account of the Statesman to the effect that the meeting was a great success.
  6. Curzon to Brodrick - 23 Feb. 1904; C.C., Vol.163.
  7. Risley's Note - 9 March 1904. N.R.P.B., op.cit., p.9.

both because he was about to proceed to England, and because he believed that he had been successful in his attempt to sweep away the objections. If they were brought up again, they would need a political platform for their sustenance.<sup>1</sup> There was, however, a practical difficulty; the replies from the local governments had not been received. In the circumstances, he was, willing to leave the case for examination and settlement in his absence.<sup>2</sup> Besides, the scheme had assumed a new aspect after his tour and the public bodies might have to be consulted.<sup>3</sup> Curzon therefore decided that to reach a "real and statesman-like solution of the problem", the scheme should be thoroughly scrutinized and examined.<sup>4</sup>

In this process of scrutiny and examination the India Office played little part. No action at all was taken by the India Office on the scheme of 3 December 1903, though there is a note by C.J. Lyall, Secretary of the Judicial and Public Committee which suggests that the reaction was not wholly favourable. Thus he took up the Government of India's argument that the Lieutenant-Governor could not personally attend to the affairs of all Bengal, and that territorial relief should therefore be given, only to state that surely the Oriya tracts which it was proposed to transfer to Bengal "could not possibly obtain the personal supervision" of the administrator either. Lyall continued:

"The transfer of Dacca away from Bengal will certainly be very strongly opposed ... Its educated classes predominate in the offices & courts, & in the legal profession, in Bengal & they will raise a great outcry".

Lyall shared Fuller's apprehension that the addition of eleven million people to Assam would change the character of that province. He also criticised the Government of India for having

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1. Curzon's Note - 3 March 1904; Ibid.

2. Ibid., p.10.

3. Ibbetson's Note - 12 March 1904; Ibid.

4. Curzon's Note - 13 March 1904; Ibid.

proceeded without consulting the Madras Government.<sup>1</sup>

Further criticism was voiced by Sir Charles Stevens who as member of the Board of Revenue had supported the proposals of 1896. But now, Stevens, in a note of 24 February 1904, argued that the Government had failed to make out a case. He opposed the transfer of Chota Nagpur as being of no benefit.<sup>2</sup> He also questioned the advisability of adding a large area to Orissa. He pointed out the inconsistency of the argument for bringing the Oriyas under one administration while putting the Bengalis under two.<sup>3</sup> He thought that adequate relief, which was the paramount consideration, would not be afforded to the Bengal administration by the present scheme and doubted the reality of the advantages envisaged by the Government of India. On the other hand, he felt that the scheme would cause inconvenience to the people, "which great and sudden changes nearly always produce at least for a time."

Instead Stevens proffered the idea of splitting Bengal into two Divisions - Western and Eastern. The Western Division was to consist of Patna, Chota Nagpur and Bhagalpur (except Malda) and possibly the Raniganj sub-division of Burdwan district. It would have an area of 86,086 square miles and a population of 29,559,133. The Eastern Division would contain the Presidency, Burdwan, Orissa, Rajshahi, and the Dacca and Chittagong Divisions except Malda and excluding Raniganj, with an area of 103,000 square miles and a population of 48,933,00.<sup>4</sup> The main advantage of the scheme was to place the Hindi-speaking districts of West Bengal under one administration and the speakers of Bengal under another. However, he noticed one disadvantage in his proposal from the services point of view -

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1. Lyall's Note - 5 Jan. 1904; J. & P. Dept., File 2857, Vol.656 of 1903.
  2. Stevens' Note - 24 Feb. 1904; Ibid., para.22. (Stevens did not have any official connection with the India Office but he had a long experience of Bengal administration having retired in 1898. The India Office probably invited his opinion.)
  3. Ibid., paras. 22,23 & 29.
  4. Ibid., para.32.

that the dry districts of Ranchi and Bhagalpur would be lost to Bengal.<sup>1</sup> He therefore preferred an organic change in the form of government by providing an Executive Council to Bengal. At the same time he suggested a decentralisation of the administration by delegating more powers to commissioners and district officers.<sup>2</sup>

Nevertheless, Lyall, though he admitted that Stevens' criticism had great weight, did not find it necessary to discuss it. Rather he tended to discount it, by finding in the note of the late Port Commissioner of Calcutta, "some trace of jealousy" of any development of Chittagong port.<sup>3</sup> The novel suggestion for Eastern and Western Divisions certainly was not pursued by the India Office.

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The official response from the governments of Orissa, Chota Nagpur, the Central Provinces, Assam, Madras and Bengal played a rather more significant part in the process of re-thinking. Some, at least, of their suggestions were accepted and incorporated in the later and the final scheme of 2 February 1905.

The Commissioner of the Orissa Division, K.G. Gupta, opposed the transfer of Orissa to the Central Provinces. He recommended that the division should be raised to the status of a Chief Commissioner's province, and thought that this would be in accordance with the wishes of the Oriyas.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Ibid., para. 33.

2. Ibid., paras. 34 & 35.

3. Lyall's Note - 11 March 1904; J. & P. Dept., File 662, Vol. 671 of 1904. Stevens disagreed with the Government of India about the need to develop the port of Chittagong as he thought that it would be at the cost of Calcutta where modern appliances were needed. Moreover, in Stevens' opinion Chittagong had an exposed coast and was open to destructive storms and tidal waves such as had occurred in 1875 and 1897.

4. Gupta, Commr. Orissa Division to Govt. of Bengal - 10 Feb. 1904; P.L., 1905, No. 31, T. Encl. 22 of Encl. 5, para. 3.



On administrative grounds, the Commissioner of Chota Nagpur advised against the incorporation of the Division in the Central Provinces. He believed that the permanently settled districts of his division would be put at a disadvantage by the transfer and that the change would not be welcomed by the people. He suggested, however, that the Hindi-speaking states of Jashpur, Sirguja, Udaipur, Korea and Changbhakar should be transferred to the Central Provinces.<sup>1</sup>

The Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces recommended that Sambalpur (minus the Phuljar and the Chandarpur-Padampur tracts which were Hindi-speaking areas) should be made a part of Orissa. He believed that the administrative inconvenience inevitably involved while the district formed part of the Central Provinces would be obviated once it was transferred to Orissa.<sup>2</sup> He also suggested that the Feudatory States of Rehrakhol, Bamra, Sonpur, Patna and Kalahandi be added to Orissa.<sup>3</sup>

The Assam Government maintained its previous stand of preferring the union of the Chittagong Division with Assam to the transfer of the Dacca and Mymensingh districts.<sup>4</sup> Admitting that the addition of the two districts would have certain advantages for Assam, they observed that it would be open to objection from the point of view of the people of Assam. Difficult communications, the absence of any community of feeling between the people of the two provinces, and the fear of Bengali domination in the public services were some of the reasons for the objection. Above all, the Government feared that the transfer of such a large tract from Bengal would

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1. Slacke, Commr. Chota Nagpur to Govt. of Bengal - 12 Feb. 1904; Ibid., L.No.957 T, Encl. 21 of Encl. 5, para.2
  2. Chief Commr. Central Provinces to Govt. of India - 15 March 1904; Ibid., L.No. 2646-A, Encl. 3, para.9.
  3. Ibid. He also suggested the transfer of the Hazaribagh, Ranchi and Palamau districts of Chota Nagpur together with its native states to the Central Provinces.
  4. Chief Commr. Assam to Govt. of India - 6 April 1904; Ibid., L.No.197, Encl. 4, paras. 4-6.

result in Assam being submerged in East Bengal.<sup>1</sup>

Referring to the larger scheme foreshadowed by Curzon in his speeches, the Assam Government considered the transfer to be of advantage to the eastern districts of Bengal, affording them greater attention than they had hitherto received. It pointed out, however, that the amputation would be resented by the inhabitants of the districts, but felt that they would probably be conciliated by the creation of a fully-fledged province with a Lieutenant-Governor.<sup>2</sup> While leaving the final decision with the Government of India, the Assam Government urged that the province should be called "Dacca and Assam", so that Assam should not lose its identity.<sup>3</sup>

At the same time Fuller, the Chief Commissioner of Assam, sent a private note to Miller, Curzon's Private Secretary, indicating his unfavourable reactions to the enlarged scheme. He suggested that instead of transferring a larger area from Bengal, the desired easing of pressure on the Bengal Government might be provided by separating Bihar and constituting it a Chief Commissioner's province.<sup>4</sup>

He deprecated the borrowing of officers from Bengal because he considered that experience in Bengal administration was not a good preparation for service in Assam. The trouble was that the Bengal Government lacked initiative and only acted when it was petitioned to take certain measures. The result was that lawyers and journalists had assumed great importance in Bengal as the people looked to them for redress. This gave an importance to the Vakil (lawyer) class, which was not conducive to a healthy administration. "A Government that

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1. Ibid., para. 10. Melitus, Commr. Assam Valley Districts, and Maxwell, Political Agent, Manipur, were strongly in favour of the transfer of Dacca and Mymensingh. Davis, Inspector General of Police, however, opposed it.

2. Chief. Commr. Assam to Govt. of India - 6 April 1904; op.cit., para.12.

3. Ibid., para.13.

4. Fuller's Note on Assam Commission - 5 April 1905; Encl. in Fuller's to Miller of 5 April 1904; C.C., Vol.209.

will only act when it is moved", observed Fuller, "is a Government which by binding its machinery to the legal profession unduly enhances the importance of lawyers and professional agitators".<sup>1</sup>

Without consulting the Madras Government, the Government of India had proposed to transfer its Oriya-speaking tracts to Orissa. Amphill, the Governor of Madras, protested to Brodrick against the Government of India's behaviour. "A cut and dried scheme", he represented, "has been prepared without our knowledge and without consulting us .... This is a most insulting and intolerable manner of dealing with the oldest and largest of the two great Indian Presidencies". He found no reason for the project except that of bringing Oriya speakers together, and even this he contested, as the language used in Ganjam Hill Tracts was Khond and not Oriya. He explained that the move would be resented by the rajas and hill chiefs. He asserted that the contention of the Government of India that the Madras Government had complained about the difficulties of administering the Oriya tracts was untrue.<sup>2</sup>

Amphill also expressed his resentment to Curzon, told him that the proposal had come as a "rude shock", and stigmatised the plan as one of Risleys fads. He hoped that the Government of India was not determined to carry it out.<sup>3</sup>

Curzon replied on 5 January 1904, expressing his readiness to consider the point of view of the Madras Government, and his hope that their objections to the proposal would be "more substantial than the hysterical outcry" raised in Bengal, where the critics were "raising piteous howls" without realising how much <sup>the</sup> Bengal Government needed relief from the burden of administration. Curzon confessed that the transfer

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1. Ibid., Curzon regarded the curtailment of the influence exercised by lawyers in Bengal as of political advantage and sent Fuller's Note to Brodrick.
  2. Amphill to Brodrick - 17 Dec. 1903; Amphill Collection, Vol. 7/2.
  3. Amphill to Curzon - 21 Dec. 1903; C.C., Vol. 208.

of the Madras tracts would add to the Bengal Government's load, but saw no reason why local governments should resent any effort to lighten their burden. He wrote, "I would gladly shove anything off from <sup>the</sup> ~~my~~ shoulder, of the Government of India, and have been imploring the Home Government to take over Aden in order to relieve our strain".<sup>1</sup>

To this implied reproof, the Madras Government replied on 20 June 1904, by attacking the value of the memorials which had prompted the Government of India to propose a union of the Oriyas. The petitioners, they declared, were interested parties and did not express the unanimous opinion of the people.<sup>2</sup> The movement for Oriya union did not originate in Ganjam, nor was there much sympathy for it in the districts concerned. On the other hand, the Madras Government claimed, the chiefs, the District Boards, the Local Boards, the Municipalities and the people concerned were averse to the proposal. They contested the statistics given by the Census Report of 1901 which had shown a larger number of Oriyas than there actually were in the tracts which it was proposed to transfer. In fact, a majority of people in those areas spoke languages other than Oriya. The difference between the revenue system in Orissa and in Ganjam, and the administrative difficulties which would result from the transfer, were further arguments against the proposal. The Government apprehended that if joined with Orissa the Madras territory would be no more than "an annexe to Bengal".<sup>3</sup>

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1. Curzon to Ampthill - 5 Jan. 1904; C.C., Vol.209.

2. The Madras Government showed that Madhusudan Das, a strong advocate of the union, was a native Christian who had sympathies for the Baptist Mission in Ganjam which had its headquarters at Cuttack. For this reason he advocated the transfer of Madras territory, and had established the Prajabandhu Press to further the movement. See Govt. of Madras to Govt. of India - 20 June 1904; P.L., 1905, Encl. 6, L. No. 531, para.16.

3. Ibid., paras. 5-12 & 18.

In Bengal it was not possible thus to brush aside the memorials and pleas against the proposal. If the bulk of the people was indifferent, the zamindars, pleaders and other professional men were united in opposing the scheme, and the local officers of the Bengal Government found some validity in their criticism. The original proposal had dealt with an area too small to provide the machinery of a fully-fledged province. The Bengal Government therefore asked its officials to examine the possibility of the transfer not just of the Dacca and Mymensingh districts but of the whole of the Dacca Division.<sup>1</sup> This would also answer the objections voiced in the British Indian Association memorial, and raised in person in conference with Fraser by the landholders of Dacca and Mymensingh who held lands in Faridpur and Backergunj against a partition which would split their estates between two administrations.<sup>2</sup>

This further proposal was not secret. It was discussed by the officials with public leaders. And it was not unknown to the press. The Bengalee of 14 January 1904, published the circular letter from the Bengal Government to the Commissioner of the Dacca Division enquiring whether the whole of the Dacca Division should be transferred to Assam. It also published a note from C. Streatfeild, the Collector of Backergunj, inviting the opinions of the Chairmen of Municipalities, of the Barisal

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1. Govt. Of Bengal to Govt. of India - 6/22 April 1904; Ibid., para.27.
  2. Ibid., para.25. One such Conference was held on 26 Dec.1903, at which the following members of the Bengal Landholders' Association were present: The Nawab of Dacca, Raja Bahadur of Deghapathya, A.M. Bose, Rai Sita Nath, Janaki Nath Roy, Rai Parvati Sanker Roy Choudhuri, Kumar Upendra Kumar Chouduri, Nawab Abdus Sobhan Chouduri, Gopal Das Chouduri, Dwarka Nath Chakravarti, Sadhu Charan Roy, G.L. Garth & H. Myres. See the Bengalee - 27 Dec. 1903; and the Amrita Bazar Patrika - 28 Dec. 1903. It is certain that some of these men expressed their acceptance for a scheme of partition, as the newspapers reported that those who favoured the transfer were not representatives of the people. See the Sri Sri Vishnu Priya-o-Ananda Bazar Patrika - 30 Dec. 1903; B.N.N.R., No.2.

Bar Library and of other "responsible gentlemen". Streatfeild, while foreshadowing the advantages of the formation of a new province with Dacca as capital and reassuring the people about the maintenance of the status quo in its laws and regulations, welcomed any sober criticism and the submission of any suitable alternative scheme which could meet the needs of Bengal.<sup>1</sup> In its issue of 15 January 1904, the paper published a leader entitled "The Further Partition of Bengal" and commented against the move.<sup>2</sup> Meetings were also held against the enlarged scheme,<sup>3</sup> and the Maharaja of Mymensingh publicly declared that Fraser was most anxious to be aware of the public views upon it and had personally asked him to elicit them.<sup>4</sup> The Sanjivani of 14 January 1904, also informed the public about the alternative proposal of transferring the Chittagong, Dacca and Rajshahi Divisions except Jalpaiguri and Darjeeling.<sup>5</sup> It only confirmed what W.B. Thompson, District Magistrate of Mymensingh stated that he invited the opinions of several associations not only on the proposals of 3 December 1903 but also on whether the Chittagong, and Dacca Divisions and also the Rajshahi Division without Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri and Cooch Behar should be transferred to Assam.<sup>6</sup> The Bengalee of 17 January 1904 confirmed this by writing in its leader, "The Three Rocks Ahead", that the scheme was no longer confined to the original proposals but now involved Faridpur, Backergunj, Khulna, Jessore and the districts of the Rajshahi Division. On 21 January 1904, in another leader "The Threatened Partition

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1. The Bengalee - 14 Jan. 1904. Also see the Bikash (Barisal) 5 Jan. 1904; the Jyoti (Chittagong) of 7 Jan. 1904; B.N.N.R. No.3; the Bikash of 12 Jan. and the Kasipur Nivasi (Barisal) of 13 Jan. 1904; Ibid., No.4; and the Amrita Bazar Patrika of 13 Jan. 1904; Ibid., No.3.
  2. The Bengalee - 15 Jan. 1904.
  3. The Bengalee - 16 & 21 Jan. 1904.
  4. The Bengalee - 19 Jan. 1904.
  5. The Sanjivani - 14 Jan. 1904; B.N.N.R., No.4. Also see the Charu Mihir - 12 Jan. 1904; Ibid.
  6. Thompson, Magistrate of Mymensingh to Commr. Dacca Division - 5 Feb. 1904; P.L., 1905, paras. 3-9.

of Bengal", the paper warned the people about the enlarged scheme. One could believe Surendra Nath Banerjea's assertion in his book about the complete secrecy of the revised plan,<sup>1</sup> had his own paper not then reported about the various meetings of protests held in the Dacca and Rajshahi Divisions against the transfer of the tracts. Thus it is a reasonable deduction that broad outlines of the larger plan were well known, though it is true that the final scheme of 2 February 1905, was not put forward for public discussion like the Government of India's scheme of 3 December 1903.

When the Bengal Government asked its officials for their views, they recommended the formation of a larger province than had been planned originally. Rankin, the Magistrate of Dacca, Streatfeild, the Collector of Backergunj, Thompson the Magistrate of Mymensingh, Greenshields, the Officiating Commissioner of the Chittagong Division, Slacke, the Commissioner of Chota Nagpur, Hare, a member of the Board of Revenue all suggested the constitution of a province almost on the lines adopted by the Government of India.<sup>2</sup> K.G. Gupta,

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1. Banerjea, op.cit., pp.186-7.

2. See Rankin to Commr. Dacca Division - 28 Jan. 1904; para.3; Streatfeild to Commr. Dacca Division - 1 Jan. 1904; para.10; Thompson to Commr. Dacca Division - 5 Feb. 1904; para.3; Greenshields to Govt. of Bengal - 9 Feb. 1904; para.13; Slacke to Govt. of Bengal - 12 Feb. 1904; paras 3-4; & Offg. Sec. Board of Revenue to Govt. of Bengal - 10 Feb. 1904; para.15. (The letter from the Board of Revenue contains Hare's opinion). Also see B.C.Sen, Collector of Noakhali to Commr. Chittagong Division - 29 Jan. 1904; para.3. P.L., 1905. Rankin recommended the transfer of the Chittagong and Dacca Divisions and Rangpur, Pabna and Bogra districts; Streatfeild not only of the Chittagong and Dacca Divisions but "as much as possible of Muhammadan Eastern Bengal"; Thompson that of the Dacca and Chittagong Divisions and also the Rajshahi Division excluding Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri and Cooch Behar. Greenshields thought that the formation of a larger province with some districts of the Rajshahi Division would allay much of the opposition. Slacke suggested the addition of the Chittagong and Dacca Divisions, while Hare in addition to the two divisions recommended the amalgamation of Rangpur, Pabna and Bogra districts. He, however, preferred the devolution of the duties of the Lieutenant-Governor through an Executive Council. Sen thought that the transfer would be of benefit to the districts.

Commissioner of the Orissa Division, recommended that the Chittagong and Dacca Divisions, portions of North Bengal including Pabna, Rangpur and Bogra and parts of Central Bengal, including Jessore and Khulna, should be severed in order to afford real relief to Bengal. He thought that these tracts amalgamated with Assam and constituting a province with a population of over twenty-nine million would offer real relief to Bengal. On the other hand a reduction of only eleven million, as planned originally would not solve the difficulty, for it would not be long before the population would be increased by that number again. He contended that the creation of such a province would merge Assam within it and that the two industries of tea and jute would be brought under one administration.<sup>1</sup>

Savage, the Commissioner of the Dacca Division, proposed the formation of three different administrations instead of two. Like some of the other officers he held that if the area administered by the Bengal Government was really to be made more manageable, it was necessary to reduce it not only on the East but also on the West. He recommended that Calcutta and its suburbs (the urban area) be administered by the Government of India directly or by a Deputy Governor; that Bihar, Chota Nagpur, Bengal West of the Hoogly and Orissa, with a population of about forty million, mostly Hindus, be formed into one province; and that Assam with the rest of Bengal, with a population of about forty million "of whom the great majority are Mussalmans united in religion and language", be also elevated into a separate province. "Eastern Bengal", observed Savage, "would no longer remain under-officered; its resources would no longer be drained to improve Calcutta or Bihar; its communications would receive proper attention..."<sup>2</sup>

Thus an enlarged and revised scheme emanating from the

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1. Gupta to Govt. of Bengal - 10 Feb. 1904; P.L. 1905; paras. 6 & 7.
  2. Savage, Commr. Dacca Division to Govt. of Bengal - 1 Feb. 1904; Ibid., Encl. 19 of Encl. 5, paras. 8-11.



district officers<sup>1</sup> as well as from public discussions was submitted by the Bengal Government on 6 April 1904. The Bengal Government claimed that Fraser had discussed the matter with people interested in the issue.<sup>2</sup> Several important persons had expressed to Fraser their acceptance of the plan in private, but they were afraid to pronounce their opinions publicly. Some of the landlords who were also members of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce and who owned property in other districts of the Dacca Division saw no objection to the scheme except the loss of the Board of Revenue. The Government thought that

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1. K.C. De, Magistrate of Faridpur, opposed the transfer of the Bengal-speaking districts to Assam as a "retrograde movement". He suggested, however, that if it was necessary to partition Bengal, the Presidency, Burdwan, Dacca, Chittagong and Rajshahi Divisions be united with Assam under a Lieutenant-Governor and that Bihar, Chota Nagpur and Orissa with Sambalpur and the Ganjam districts be formed into a separate government. See K.C. De to Commr. Dacca Division - 31 Jan. 1904; Ibid., L.No.235.G. Encl. to Encl. 19 of Encl. 5, paras 3-5. Scroope, the Collector of Tippera also objected to the transfer and favoured the provision of a Governor with Council. See H.W.P. Scroope, to Commr. Chittagong Division - 4 Feb. 1904; Ibid., Encl. to Encl. 20 of Encl. 5, paras. 3-7. Buckland, member of the Board of Revenue also criticised the scheme. He thought that "Calcutta being the focus of their material interests", the educated and professional classes of Bengal would resent the proposal. He preferred the provision of an Executive Council to the Lieutenant-Governor but suggested the formation of a "sub-montane administration" consisting of Patna Division with parts of Monghyr and Bhagalpur north of the Ganges, Purnea, Dinajpur, Jalpaiguri, Rangpur and Cooch Behar as one administration including Assam leaving only Darjeeling to Bengal. His scheme reduced the population of Bengal to sixty million and formed an Assam with a population of twenty-three million. See Buckland's Note - 29 Feb. 1904; Ibid., Encl. 18 of Encl. 5, paras. 8-9.
  2. Govt. of Bengal to Govt. of India - 6/22 April 1904. op.cit., para.17. Fraser held another conference on 10 Feb. 1904 attended by sixty men from different parts of Bengal. Representatives of the British Indian Association and Bengal Landholders' Association were also present. See the Bengalee - 11 Feb. 1904. Before this, at least two other conferences had taken place. See Govt. of Bengal to Govt. of India - 6/22 April 1904; op.cit., para.45.

these people had accepted the enlarged scheme which Fraser had asked them to consider.<sup>1</sup> "There are now a large number of persons", contended the Bengal Government, "who strongly support the expanded scheme of the Government of India; and there are many more whose support of it would undoubtedly be openly given, if it were not that they are pledged to carry out the opposition which has been organised against the scheme."<sup>2</sup> Fraser admitted that a very large number of memorials and petitions had been received by his Government against the scheme, but stressed that he had "also received some strong opinions in its favour".<sup>3</sup> He believed that the opposition to the scheme, mainly based on misconceptions and "somewhat narrow views of self interest", would disappear if the plan provided for a new Lieutenant-Governorship.<sup>4</sup>

The Bengal Government therefore recommended the formation of a new province consisting of Assam, and the Chittagong and Dacca Divisions including the districts of Pabna, Bogra and Rangpur, to be known as "The North Eastern Province" with Dacca as its capital. The inclusion of all the districts of the Dacca Division was proposed as it was considered administratively inadvisable to split the division into two, and also because many zamindars had property in all the four districts of the Division. The incorporation of Rangpur, Bogra and Pabna districts was recommended, both to afford more adequate relief to Bengal and because the districts were largely Muslim in population and had more in common with Dacca than with other parts of Bengal.<sup>5</sup>

Originally Fraser did not recommend the addition of the Pabna, Bogra and Rangpur districts of the Rajshahi Division, and left the population of Bengal under the enlarged scheme at 66,674,824 and that of the proposed province at 21,831,387. In Curzon's opinion the reduction was not

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1. Ibid., para.46.

2. Ibid., para.24.

3. Ibid., para.17.

4. Ibid., paras. 17 & 23.

5. Ibid., paras. 25 & 27.

sufficiently substantial and was "subject to precisely the same objection as was the original and unexpanded scheme",<sup>1</sup> which had left Bengal's population at 67,500,484. He therefore suggested two alternatives; either to separate Orissa and join it to the Central Provinces or to add the districts of Pabna, Bogra and Rangpur to the territories already recommended for transfer.<sup>2</sup>

Fraser rejected the idea of transferring Orissa to the Central Provinces and instead accepted Curzon's alternative of adding the three districts. "Dacca and these districts" wrote

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1. Curzon to Fraser - 8 April 1904; C.C., Vol.209.  
Fraser's letter recommending the transfer of Chittagong and Dacca Divisions is not traceable. It is however, certain that Fraser originally recommended the transfer of the two divisions only. This is verified from Curzon's letter to Fraser of 8 April 1904, in which Curzon quotes the figure of Bengal's population as 66,674,824 as outlined by Fraser under the revised scheme. The figure represents the population of Bengal after taking away Chittagong and Dacca Divisions, the Hindi-speaking states of Chota Nagpur and the addition of certain tracts from Madras and the Central Provinces. After deducting 4,429,175 - the population of Pabna, Bogra and Rangpur - from 66,674,824, (the figure originally proposed by Fraser), Bengal is left with 62,245,649, (the figure finally suggested by the Bengal Government in their letter of 6/22 April 1904). It appears that Fraser had sent an advance copy of this letter to Curzon (recommending the transfer of the Dacca and Chittagong Divisions only). On hearing from Curzon on 8 April 1904 about the two alternatives, Fraser incorporated the suggestion of transferring the three districts of Rajshahi Division without substantially changing the contents of the original letter (as Curzon in his letter of 8 April 1904 referred to certain paragraphs of Fraser's letter which are partly found in Bengal's letter of 6/22 April 1904) and issued the same on 22 April 1904.
  2. Fraser to Curzon - 16 April 1904. C.C., Vol.209.  
On 8 April Curzon had suggested to Fraser the further transfer of the Orissa Division to the Central Provinces; he showed his doubts about this as on 14 April 1904, when he wrote to Fraser that the transfer of Orissa and the Native States of Chota Nagpur to the Central Provinces would involve the erection of that province into a Lieutenant-Governorship which was a "serious consideration" as it would create two new Lieutenant-Governorships. See Curzon's telegram to Fraser - 14 April 1904; Ibid.

Fraser "have special problems; and it will be a great relief to get rid of them".<sup>1</sup>

The Bengal Government hoped that by the adoption of the expanded scheme the transferred districts would receive greater attention and consideration;<sup>2</sup> that many of the objections to the scheme would disappear; and that the eastern districts instead of being absorbed in Assam would become an important part of that administration.<sup>3</sup>

The Bengal Government did not favour the transfer of Chota Nagpur Division. They recommended however, that its Hindi-speaking states should be added to the Central Provinces,<sup>4</sup> and that Sambalpur and its Feudatory States should form part of Orissa. They also resisted the idea of transferring Orissa to the Central Provinces, as that province would be too small to constitute an independent unit of administration. Moreover such a move would not greatly reduce the administrative problems of Bengal.<sup>5</sup>

The scheme as formulated by the Bengal Government was to constitute the area and population of the provinces on the following lines:-

	<u>The Proposed Province</u>	
	Area in square miles	Population
Assam	56,243	6,126,343
The Dacca Division	15,042	10,793,988
The Chittagong Division	15,859	4,911,056
The Districts of Pabna, Bogra and Rangpur	6,691	4,429,175
Total	<u>93,835</u>	<u>26,260,562</u>

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1. Fraser to Curzon - 16 April 1904; C.C., Vol. 209. It is not unlikely that Fraser was influenced by Curzon's telegram of 14 April 1904.
  2. Govt. of Bengal to Govt. of India - 6/22 April 1904; op.cit., para. 29.
  3. Ibid., para. 23.
  4. Ibid., paras. 5-8.
  5. Ibid., paras. 11-14.

	Area in square miles	Population
Bengal as it stood including the Feudatory States	189,837	78,493,410
<u>Addition</u>		
From the Central Provinces.	13,722	1,608,391
From Madras.	20,994	2,861,244
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total	224,553	82,963,045
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<u>Deduct</u>		
1. East Bengal	37,590	20,134,219
2. Hindi-speaking states of Chota Nagpur	11,604	583,177
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Balance	175,359	62,245,649
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Thus, in contrast to the original proposal of 1903 to reduce the population of Bengal by eleven million, Fraser had recommended a reduction of sixteen million, leaving Bengal with some 62 million and creating a new province of 26 million people.

The Bengal Government when making these recommendations, defined its purpose in the following words:-

"The primary object is to improve administration in Bengal, by reducing its area, and so making it a more reasonable charge for one Local Government. The next object is so to select the districts to be separated from Bengal, that the final scheme may be such as best to secure the interests of the people generally and the efficiency of administration". 1

The political advantages of the scheme, Fraser purposely abstained from describing in this letter, as he did not wish to discuss them "publicly or officially". He did record them, however, in a separate note to Curzon. In this note, Fraser argued that the severance of East Bengal would not hamper the sound political development of that province if it were sufficiently large, while it was

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1. Ibid., para.4.

"true that its separation from the rest of the Province will have a tendency to reduce the influence of Calcutta wire-pullers, and to set Eastern Bengal free from the political domination of Calcutta."

The curtailment of this influence was certainly one of the objects of the framers of the scheme. The districts proposed to be transferred were predominantly Muhammadan and it was not wise to see them contaminated by the Congress party in Calcutta. "Nor is it", wrote Fraser, "Muhammadans only who feel this; there are some among the Hindus who recognise that the influence of that party is not by any means an unmixed advantage to Eastern Bengal".<sup>1</sup> The separation of East Bengal would go a long way to diminish the political influence of Calcutta, for it would be difficult "to consolidate Eastern and Western Bengal into one political organisation, dominated by Calcutta Associations and more or less terrorised or disciplined by Calcutta Native Press."<sup>2</sup>

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1. Fraser's Note on the Political Aspect of the question of the Partition of Bengal - 21 April 1904; Middleton Papers, No.50072, para.4, B.M.
  2. Ibid., para.6. Fraser had only hinted at this aspect of the scheme in his official letter of 6/22 April 1904 when he wrote, "Almost all the Muhammadans and a very considerable minority even of the educated Hindus have little sympathy with the political life and work of Calcutta. By many the influence exercised by the press and the leaders of Calcutta is felt to be of a somewhat tyrannical character." See Govt. of Bengal to Govt. of India - 6/22 April 1904; op.cit., para.46.

## Chapter IV

### Bengal Partitioned

On 30 April 1904, Curzon proceeded on leave to England. Ampthill took over. Curzon while in England, was too occupied with other questions to give any attention to the question of the partition. In his correspondence of this period there are very few letters which deal with the issue and there is none from Curzon himself indicating the way in which he felt the scheme should be implemented. Ampthill, who was keeping the Viceregal seat warm for Curzon and felt as though he were "only half a Viceroy" having to "deal with 2 Secretaries of State" in Curzon's absence,<sup>1</sup> did not proceed further than asking Risley to prepare the draft of the despatch to be ready by the time of his master's return.

From now onwards Risley became the presiding genius. He formulated the final plan which was eventually accepted by the Secretary of State. Since Ampthill was known to have been against the amputation of the Madras areas, the officials started re-writing the notes on that part of the scheme. What Arundel had failed to effect when he opposed the severance of the Madras areas was accomplished now.

Stokes<sup>2</sup> and Risley both recommended that the idea of transferring Madras territory should be dropped. Stokes pointed out that the transfer was warranted neither by the requirements of administrative expediency nor on the grounds of linguistic homogeneity. The proposal was inconsistent in that the Government of India was prepared to recognise the existence and help the development of Oriya nationality but refused "to admit the force of a similar argument against the severance of East Bengal". He was of the view that if administrative necessities in the case of Bengal justified over-

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1. Ampthill to Thomson - 8 Aug. 1904; Ampthill Collection, Vol. 34/1.
  2. H.G. Stokes was Under-Sec. Home Dept., Govt. of India.

ruling the objections that Bengali "nationality" would be disrupted, the same considerations should prevent the transfer of the Madras area to Bengal especially when the case for the union of the Oriyas had not been clearly established.<sup>1</sup>

Risley following Stokes, admitted that the transfer would "pro tanto" defeat the main objective of the scheme to relieve the Bengal Government. He dismissed the plea of the union of the Oriyas as an idea manufactured from Cuttack "in the same way as the Eastern Bengal agitation was organised from Calcutta".<sup>2</sup> With the approval of Ampthill the proposal was finally dropped.<sup>3</sup>

As far as Bengal was concerned, Risley felt that the Bengal Government's scheme of 6/22 April 1904 was a great improvement on the original plan and would "go a long way to meeting all the reasonable objections to the so-called partition of Bengal". He doubted, however, if it went far enough and therefore suggested that the whole of the Rajshahi Division including Cooch Behar, but not Darjeeling, and Malda from the Bhagalpur Division should be made a part of Assam. If this enlarged plan was adopted; the population of Bengal would be substantially reduced - it would leave Bengal with fifty-four million and constitute the new province with thirty-one million. Thus it would do away with the Bengali objection that the population would increase to its former size through demographic causes in years to come. The new province would have a well defined boundary which would correspond with the division formed by the "physical, linguistic and ethnological characteristics" of the population. It would concentrate nearly all the "characteristic Muhammadans of Bengal" and would make

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1. Stokes' Note - 18 Aug. 1904; N.R.P.B., C.C., Vol.247, paras. 27-38.
  2. Risley's Note - 1 Sept. 1904; Ibid. paras. 4-6.
  3. Ampthill's Note - 10 Sept. 1904; Ibid. Also see Ampthill to Brodrick - 3 Aug. 1904; Ampthill to Curzon - 19 Sept. 1904; Ampthill Collection, Vol.34/1. Also see Miller to Curzon - 3 July 1904; C.C., Vol.214.



Dacca the capital of the province where the Muhammadan interests would be "strongly represented if not predominant". It would put the tea and the jute industry under one administration. Risley believed that his plan to incorporate the Northern Bengal districts would allay the objection that the people of Bikrampur employed in those districts would lose their jobs. Moreover, he felt that the plan would satisfy those landowners of Rajshahi and Dinajpur who had property in the districts already recommended for transfer. No changes were proposed by Risley to the recommendations of the Bengal Government about Chota Nagpur, its feudatory states and the Sambalpur district.<sup>1</sup>

After a preliminary examination of Risley's proposal Hewett gave it his support,<sup>2</sup> and the scheme, duly approved by Ampthill, was forwarded to the Bengal and Assam Governments for their views.<sup>3</sup> Fraser discussed the amended plan with the members of the Board of Revenue and some senior officers of his Government. All supported it except the Commissioner of the Rajshahi Division, who suggested that Jalpaiguri should be left with Bengal - a suggestion which was overruled by Fraser. Fraser was conscious that the scheme would be "objected to by many" but hoped that eventually the people would become reconciled to the change. One of the merits of the proposal, Fraser felt was that

"the Muhammadans will have power and influence which will enable them much more easily to attract attention to their necessities and their rights than in this province, where the Hindu population of these districts is so much more in touch with the influential Hindu element in the other districts of Bengal".<sup>4</sup>

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1. Risley's Note - 1 Sept. 1904; N.R.P.B., op.cit., paras. 7-10. Also see his Note of 6 Dec. 1904; Ibid., paras. 14, 19-21.
  2. Hewett's Note - 9 Sept. 1904; Ibid. Hewett thought that a larger province would do away with the objection that the Bengal districts would be swallowed up by Assam.
  3. Govt. of India to Govt. of Bengal - 13 Sept. 1904; P.L., 1905. Vol. 33, Encl. 7, L. No. 1902.
  4. Govt. of Bengal to Govt. of India - 26 Sept. 1904; Ibid., Encl. 7, L. No. 2789.J.D.

The Assam Government accepted the proposal rather hesitatingly. They apprehended that the new province would be unpopular with the Europeans as it would consist of the districts generally "considered to be the penal stations of Bengal". They however, did not fail to appreciate the benefits accruing to the Muslim population of the proposed province.<sup>1</sup>

After the receipt of the replies from the Bengal and Assam Governments, Risley prepared the draft of the despatch. The draft included an exposition of the administrative and political advantages of the scheme as well as an answer to public objections. In reply to the Bengali demand for an Executive Council Risley repeated his earlier objections: that direct and personal methods of government were better suited to Indians; a Council would weaken the administration by splitting up responsibility. Furthermore, it would give "the greatest possible encouragement to the spirit of intrigue and log-rolling" which he found "far stronger in Bengal than in any other part of India". Risley feared that under such an arrangement, the "Bengalis would lay themselves out to get hold of Members of Council to extract from them information as to matters under discussion" and would utilise them as exponents of their cause.<sup>2</sup>

Having dismissed the suggestion of an Executive Council Risley considered whether the desired objectives of the Government would be met through any alternative schemes- by raising Bihar to a Chief Commissioner's province and transferring Orissa to the Central Provinces and making the latter a Lieutenant-Governor's province, or by constituting Orissa into a Chief Commissionership.

He opposed the idea of separating Bihar. He objected to it in the interests of the Civil Service on the grounds that it would deprive the Bengal officers of some of the most

1. Chief Commr. Assam to Govt. of India - 24 Sept. 1904; Ibid., Encl. 10, L. No. 144, Confdl -4247-P.
2. Risley's Note - 6 Dec. 1904; N.R.P.B., op.cit., para.9.

salubrious districts of the province; such a separation, he thought, would be a permanent obstacle to the development of Assam, as even with the Chittagong Division, Assam would not be large enough to maintain independent services. On the other hand, the Bihar Commission would also have to depend on borrowed services, thus creating two anomalies - Assam on the east and Bihar on the west. In addition to these administrative objections which he made against the separation of Bihar, Risley opposed it on political grounds, claiming that it would consolidate "the Bengali influence and so-called national sentiment". "Instead of breaking up the present combination of political agitators", he argued, "and creating wholesome centres of provincial opinion, it would strengthen the predominance of the political organisations..."<sup>1</sup>

Likewise Risley opposed transferring Orissa to the Central Provinces and raising it to a Lieutenant-Governor's province, for this could only be done "at the cost of stereotyping the existing condition of Assam".<sup>2</sup> Similarly, he dismissed the suggestion that Orissa should be made a Chief Commissionership, as Orissa, once the idea of transferring the Madras areas had been rejected, would not be large enough to support a service of its own. Moreover, the curtailment of the pressure on the Bengal Government would be insufficient and Assam would be left as it was. The result would be the creation of two Commissionerships instead of one (Assam and Orissa), each borrowing its officers from other provinces.<sup>3</sup>

Without giving any reasons, Risley rejected the schemes suggested by Buckland, Stevens, and Savage.<sup>4</sup> He agreed as to

1. Ibid., pp.45-46. paras. 23- 4.

2. Ibid., para.25.

3. Ibid., para.26. McLane in examining the Government of India's opposition to the separation of Bihar has given only one reason, that of the interest of the Civil Services. See McLane, op.cit., p.359. Ghosh is wrong in stating that Curzon did not consider any of the alternative plans. See Ghosh, op.cit., p.123.

4. See above, pp. 106, 115-6.

the advantages to be gained by the creation of an eastern province as Savage described them; these ideas fitted in well with the view of the Government of India.

Finally Risley examined the objections hitherto raised against the scheme of partition. He based them on the memorial submitted by Peary Mohun Mukerjee which he thought to be the "final expression" of the opinions of the educated Bengalis opposing the proposals. It had been alleged in the memorial that the division of the Bengali nation would disrupt the historical, social and linguistic ties and would hamper the intellectual, social and material progress of the people.<sup>1</sup>

Risley took the above as the objections of the Congress party put in somewhat indefinite language, on which he commented as he had done before that "Bengal united is a power, Bengal divided will pull several different ways". He found the apprehensions of the Congress leaders to be "perfectly correct" and thought that they formed "one of the great merits of the scheme". He continued:

"It is not altogether easy to reply in a despatch which is sure to be published without disclosing the fact that in this scheme as in the matter of the amalgamation of Behar [sic for Berar] to the Central Provinces one of our main objects is to split up and thereby weaken a solid body of opponents to our rule".

Having admitted the political advantage, Risley suggested that the reply to the objections in the despatch might be formed as follows:-

"At the present moment it is not too much to say that no public opinion in the proper sense of the term exists in Bengal. What passes for public opinion is manufactured to order by an unscrupulous organization carrying on its operations from Calcutta. This organization is controlled by a clique of Congress wire-pullers who meet at the India Club, their object being that no views on any public question should find public utterance except their own. They have the Bengali

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1. Peary Mohun Mookerjee to Gov-Gen. - 5 Oct. 1906. P.L., 1905, para.1(b).

press at their disposal and make unscrupulous use of the weapon of personal attack. Their constant effort, hitherto defeated mainly by the influence of the Dacca Nawab, has been to induce leading Muhammadans to submit to their influence. If Dacca is made the capital of the new province, these chances of capturing the Bengal Muhammadans will become still more remote."

Risley was of the opinion that it was necessary to encourage the growth of independent centres of public opinion in various parts of the province which he hoped, could be achieved by reducing "the numerical preponderance of Bengal Hindus" by dividing the province. By doing so, he expected that independent centres of public opinion would appear among the Muslims of Dacca, the inhabitants of Behar at Patna, and the Oriyas at Cuttack and that "a small knot of men at Calcutta" would no longer be able to manipulate and manufacture public opinion throughout Bengal. Thus, new avenues would be opened up for the formation of "genuine and healthy public opinion". Moreover, he argued that a mere reconstruction of provincial boundaries could not "prove fatal to any sense of community of interests and racial sympathy that may exist among Bengalis as such".<sup>1</sup>

What Risley admitted in his confidential note to be the political advantage of partitioning Bengal, he disavowed in the despatch of 2 February 1905, sent to the Secretary of State where he wrote that the alleged disruption of the historical, social and linguistic ties was:

"the belief of those who regard the question solely from what we venture to think the rather narrow standpoint of certain vague political aspirations".<sup>2</sup>

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1. Risley's Note - 6 Dec. 1904; op.cit., para.32.

2. Govt. of India to Sec. of State - 2 Feb. 1905; P.L., 1905, para.27. The full paragraph reads as under:-

"This states in somewhat indefinite language the professional politician's objections to the scheme; Bengal united is a power, Bengal divided will pull several different ways. That is the belief of those who regard the question solely from what we venture to think the rather narrow standpoint of certain vague political aspirations... The present

There were further educational, constitutional and other privileges about which Peary Mohun Mookerjee had expressed concern.<sup>1</sup> Risley, however, was of the view that decentralisation in educational matters was desirable. He regarded the concentration of educational institutions in Calcutta to be bad from the point of view of health and morals, and declared that it encouraged the students "to take an active part in political agitation". But there was no reason to apprehend that the formation of the new province would adversely affect the educational interests of the people.<sup>2</sup>

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fn. 2 continued from previous page.

agitation furnishes a notable illustration of the system under which a particular set of opinions expressed practically in the same words is sent out with a mandate from Calcutta to be echoed in the form of telegraphic protests and formal memorials from a number of different places all over Bengal.... It is difficult to imagine a state of things more calculated to stifle and retard genuine national development than that which has been created by the action of the small body of persons who claim to represent the Bengali nation. From every point of view it appears to us desirable to encourage the growth of centres of independent opinion, local aspirations, local ideas, and to preserve the growing intelligence and enterprise of Bengal from being cramped and stunted by the process of forcing it prematurely into a mould of rigid and sterile uniformity. In course of time, if the subtle tendencies which determine social expansion and intellectual advancement are only given a fair field, it may be expected that such centres will arise among the Muhammadans at Dacca, among the natives of Behar at Patna, and among the Uriyas at Cuttack, and that it will no longer be possible for a small knot of persons at Calcutta to manipulate or manufacture public opinion throughout the whole of Bengal."

1. Peary Mohun Mookerjee to Gov-Gen. - 5 Oct. 1904; op.cit., para. 1(c).
2. Risley's Note - 6 Dec. 1904; op.cit., para. 32.  
W. Parsons, Sec. Bengal Chamber of Commerce had particularly stressed that the Govt. should give a guarantee that the jurisdiction of the Calcutta High Court would not be interfered with. See Parsons to Govt. of Bengal - 19 March 1904; P.L., 1905; Encl. 2, L. No. 491.

The argument about the loss of a seat on the Legislative Council was no longer to be sustained, as a Council was being provided for. Nor were the apprehensions about recourse to legislation on the lines of non-regulated provinces true. Instead of the Board of Revenue, which Risley thought to be "an anachronism", he recommended a Financial Commissioner. The jurisdiction of the Calcutta High Court was to remain intact for the time being over the severed territory, but it was not possible to give an assurance about the future.<sup>1</sup>

Since Bengali was to be the dominant language of the new province, Risley brushed aside the objection that the language would suffer, though he did not take into consideration that in Western Bengal the Bengali-speaking people would be reduced to a minority. He also thought that an administrative measure would not cause any social division or inconvenience. However, he admitted that the people of Bikrampur would have their chances of employment restricted and in order to meet this difficulty he suggested that the Government of India should remove provincial restrictions. The memorialists had also apprehended a loss of trade, fearing that it would be diverted to the new port of Chittagong.<sup>2</sup> Risley did not attach much importance to the objection as he thought that trade would follow the cheapest route, and that, in any case, a substantial quantity of jute would continue to come to Calcutta on account of its mills. He realised that Chittagong would attract the jute produce because it would be the cheaper port, but he believed that with increased Government attention to the needs of the new province, the jute-growing area was bound to expand

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1. Risley's Note - 6 Dec. 1904; op.cit., para.32.

2. Hon. Sec. Bengal National Chamber of Commerce to Govt. of Bengal - 3 Feb. 1904; P.L., 1905; Encl. 4 of Encl. 5, para.63. For material objections to the scheme, also see Peary Mohun Mookerjee to Gov-Gen. - 5 Oct. 1904; op.cit., paras. 16, 17, 28-32, 42-44.

and furnish ample trade for both Calcutta and Chittagong.<sup>1</sup> He regarded the objection that new taxes would be imposed in order to meet the cost of the new buildings and the duplication of services as absurd, since the Government of India was to provide for the necessary funds from its surplus revenues.

Risley gave the following analysis of the distribution of the population in the respective provinces,<sup>2</sup> if the enlarged scheme were adopted.

	<u>Proposed Province</u>	<u>Bengal</u>	<u>Central Provinces</u>
<u>Area</u>	108,540	141,580	131,564
<u>Population</u>	31,528,433	54,096,806	13,621,559
<u>Bengali- speaking</u>	27,272,895	17,108,507	7,059,641
<u>Others</u>	4,255,538	37,008,027*	6,542,190 <sup>+</sup>
<u>Hindus</u>	12,036,352	42,160,932	11,052,011
<u>Muslims</u>	18,036,688	9,039,955	519,432

\* included 26,000,000 Hindi-speaking and 7,600,000 Oriyas.

+ included 4,421,494 Marathi-speaking

Risley's analysis leads us to the conclusion that he was not scrutinising the proposals purely on their own merits. His purpose in rejecting the alternative schemes for the separation of Bihar and Orissa was to a certain extent, to

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1. Risley's Note - 6 Dec. 1904; op.cit., para.32. Also see Govt. of Bengal to Govt. of India - 6/22 April 1904; L.No. 2556 J. op.cit., paras. 42-44 & 48. Various associations had replied that the reconstruction of boundaries would have no effect on trade or industry. See Sec. Bengal Chamber of Commerce to Govt. of Bengal - 19 March 1904, op.cit., paras. 2 & 3; Asstt. Sec. Baled Jute Association to Sec. Bengal Chamber of Commerce - 27 Jan. 1904; L. No.483 T; Asstt. Sec. Indian Jute Mills' Association to Sec. Bengal Chamber of Commerce - 29 Jan. 1904; L. No.13D. para.2; Asstt. Sec. Indian Mining Association to Sec. Bengal Chamber of Commerce - 23 Feb. 1904; L.No.75R; Asstt. Sec. Indian Tea Association to Sec. Bengal Chamber of Commerce - 26 March 1904; L.No. 2050, P.L., 1905.
  2. Risley's Note - 6 Dec. 1904; op.cit., paras. 34 & 35.



find justification for the plans propounded by the Government of India, and was coloured by the desire to meet Curzon's wishes. Before leaving for England, Curzon had directed Risley "to criticise and reject a scheme of redistribution" which represented the "line of least resistance".<sup>1</sup> Probably, the separation of Bihar was thought to have been "the line of least resistance" to the Bengalis, though it is highly doubtful if they would have acquiesced in it without clamour. Risley only considered the raising of Bihar into a Chief Commissioner's province but not its conversion into a Lieutenant-Governorship as was resorted to by Lord Hardinge in 1911. This would have removed the objection of borrowing the officers from other provinces, as the province would have been self-contained. But the problem of Assam would have remained unsolved. Moreover, the eastern districts of Bengal with their admitted history of past neglect would have hardly benefited from such a plan, nor the Muslim population of the tracts would have attracted the attention of the administrator. Even Lord Crewe, the Secretary of State, who did away with the arrangement of 1905, had to admit this when he wrote:

"It is universally admitted that up to the year 1905 the task which the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal and his subordinates had to perform, having regard to the extent of the Presidency, to its population, and the difficulties of communication in many districts, was one with which no energy or capacity could completely cope. It is equally certain that the provincial centre of gravity was unduly diverted to the western portion of the area, and to Calcutta itself, with the result that the Mahomedan community of Eastern Bengal were unintentionally deprived of an adequate share of consideration and attention.... the name of Dacca, once so familiar to British ears, had become almost unknown to them." 2

On his return to India in December 1904, Curzon examined Risley's draft, which had been kept ready for his

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1. Ibid., para.23.

2. Sec. of State to Gov-Gen. - 1 Nov. 1911; H.P., Vol.113, U.L.C.

perusal. He thought that the case had proceeded in the right direction in his absence, and approved of the scheme except for the idea of including Cooch Behar, which he suggested should be placed under the Government of India.<sup>1</sup>

Curzon felt that the enlarged scheme indicated neither a "change of position" nor "vacillation" on the part of the Government but a "progressive advance" towards the ideal of relieving the Government of Bengal. He noted that after his tour of Eastern Bengal the proposals had made a positive progress towards the creation of a new province - the suggestion "having emanated from public discussion and public opinion rather than from the Government".<sup>2</sup>

Curzon directed Risley to put the arguments against the introduction of a Council in Bengal with greater force with "a view to obtaining the consent of the India Office". He felt sure that this was "the aspect upon which the opponents of the scheme" would unite and "seek to defeat us in England". Since the failure to provide a Council for Bengal could be questioned on the grounds that both Madras and Bombay possessed them, Curzon argued that in those presidencies, a Council was provided in order to guide a governor who was an outsider and "ignorant of the conditions of Indian administration".<sup>3</sup> Moreover, he felt that if the Lieutenant-Governor was appointed from amongst the men serving the province, the councillors would be disgruntled because one of their number had not been chosen; if he was from outside the province, the local knowledge of the councillors would give them a feeling of superiority over the Lieutenant-Governor.

Having dismissed the idea of a Council working in co-operation with a Lieutenant-Governor, Curzon considered whether it would be advantageous to have a Council together with a Governor appointed from outside the province. He dropped the

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1. Curzon's Note - 26 Dec. 1904; N.R.P.B., op.cit., para.2.

2. Ibid., para.4.

3. Ibid., para.5.

idea since he felt that Bengal with its peculiar needs required an officer with intimate knowledge of its affairs. Besides, the idea of the Governor as well as the Governor-General (both from England) living in the same city did not appeal to him.<sup>1</sup>

Having given his approval, Curzon urged an early despatch of the proposal to London, as in the event of a change of Government in Britain which might result in a Radical administration, he feared that "great pressure would be placed by the Bengali party upon the latter not to commence their reign with a measure so distasteful to the Congress".<sup>2</sup>

On 6 January 1905, after the unanimous approval of the Council, it was decided to submit the proposal to the Secretary of State.<sup>3</sup> The financial side of the scheme was worked out hurriedly. Risley prepared the despatch. Curzon gave it a final polish and it was sent to the Secretary of State on 2 February 1905.

The same day Curzon wrote to Brodrick explaining the indisputable necessity of relieving Bengal and the need to improve its administration. He stressed that no other redistribution of territories could obviate the condition in Bengal and Assam and that the decision reached represented the unanimous judgement of the officials concerned. He recapitulated his earlier argument that it would be injurious to the interests

of Bengal to provide it with an Executive Council. Finally, Curzon explained that the opposition to the scheme by the

1. Ibid., paras. 7-12. Curzon's opposition to the provision of a Council was hardly surprising in view of his earlier stand when he approached the Sec. of State to abolish the Councils in Madras and Bombay. See Gov-Gen. to Sec. of State - 28 Sept. 1899; I.H.P.P., 1900, Vol.5872, Proc.71 for March, L. No. 59, paras. 21-2. Also see Sec. of State to Gov.Gen. - 15 Feb. 1900; Ibid., Proc. 71, L. No.16, paras. 4-7. Also see J. & P. Dept., File 1953, Vol.521 of 1899. Also see Stokes, op.cit., 256-7.

2. Curzon's Note - 26 Dec. 1904; op.cit., para.16.

3. Lord Kitchener, Law, Arundel, Richards, Ellis & Ibbetson all accepted the proposals. N.R.P.B., op.cit., p.69. Also see Curzon to Ampthill - 8 Jan. 1905; C.C., Vol.210.

Congress party was "inspired by political motives directed to a political end". He <sup>repeated</sup> ~~communicated~~ that since Calcutta was the centre of Congress activities, "any measure ... that would divide the Bengali-speaking population; that would permit independent centres of activity and influence to grow up; that would dethrone Calcutta from its place as the centre of successful intrigue, or that would weaken the influence of the lawyer class" was intensely opposed by that party.<sup>1</sup> He attributed the opposition to the fact that the Congress realised that it would lose some of its power and influence. In order to convince Brodrick of the political advantages of the scheme, Curzon sent two notes prepared by Fraser and Fuller on this aspect of the plan and asked him for an early decision.<sup>2</sup>

Looking at some of the arguments of Curzon, one cannot but feel that, like those of Risley, they were directed towards justifying the Government of India's scheme. Convinced as

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1. Curzon to Brodrick - 2 Feb. 1905; C.C., Vol.164.
  2. Fraser's Note of 21 April 1904; on the political side of the question has been referred to at p.120-1. McLane has dismissed Curzon's letter of 2 Feb. 1905 indicating the political advantages of the scheme being "only an additional or incidental justification". He has made a sweeping statement by writing that "this was the only letter among the dozens written to people in India and England in which Curzon mentioned this argument". (McLane, op.cit., pp.362-5). McLane seems to have seen Curzon's papers very cursorily, as there are various other letters on the political aspect of the scheme included in Curzon Papers at B.M., which McLane consulted, viz. Curzon to Brodrick - 17 Feb. 1904; Curzon to Godley - 5 Jan. 1905; Gov-Gen. to Sec. of State - 24 May 1905; (Telegram); Fraser to Curzon - 6 June 1905; Godley to Curzon - 26 Jan. 1905. In his letter of 5 Jan. 1905 Curzon wrote to Godley that the partition was acceptable to everyone "except the Congress party who see in the sub-division of Bengal - a weakening of Bengali influence in the future and a cruel postponement of the day when Cotton's ideal of an anticipated Bengal under a Babu Lieutenant-Governor, will be realised". See Curzon to Godley - 5 Jan. 1905; Kilbracken Collection, Vol.24.

Curzon was about both the administrative and the political advantages of the proposal, he was equally sure that it would be opposed by the Bengalis, and made no secret of this in his communications to Brodrick. He had to satisfy the India Office and some of his arguments were introduced by the need to seek their approval. His argument that an Executive Council would be full of intrigue and that Government secrets would be leaked to the public through its members does not appear to be very convincing. There were Councils in Madras and Bombay. Even without a Council, there could not be an absolute guarantee against the leakage of state secrets. Curzon's own minute on Departmentalisation was published by the Statesman of 7 Jan. 1906. Similarly the minutes of Henry Cotton and the High Court against the earlier scheme of 1896 had been reproduced verbatim by many Bengali newspapers. There were constant complaints of leakages. Moreover, a Government has to be run on confidence and trust and not on suspicion. Curzon's appraisal of the situation overlooked these points. He could hardly anticipate that the Council of the Viceroy as well as that of the Secretary of State would both contain Indians immediately after he quitted India.

But the <sup>argument</sup> ~~fact~~ that both Fraser and Curzon <sup>used</sup> ~~wrote~~ in their official despatches that the enlarged scheme emanated from public discussion was not without some truth. Previously, on the proposals of 1896-97 the Dacca Gazette and the Dacca Prakash had pointed out the advantages of the formation of a new province. The Sanjivani had commented that if the eastern districts should be separated, they should be put under a Lieutenant-Governor.<sup>1</sup> In 1903, the members of the Chittagong District Board had presented an address to Bourdillon, Officiating Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal for the transfer of the Division.<sup>2</sup> The Weekly Chronicle also supported the transfer and asked the critics to "stand superior to provincialism".

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1. See above, pp. 35-6.

2. See above, p. 75.

Why should Assam, the paper asked, for ever remain a non-regulation province?<sup>1</sup> The Nivedan and the Khulna Hitaishi thought that East Bengal would benefit from partition. The Khulna Hitaishi <sup>contested</sup> dispelled the idea that the Bengalis would cease to be Bengalis by reason of the transfer of territory.<sup>2</sup> The Indian Mirror admitted that there were certainly some people who had stood for partition, but the paper assigned selfish motives to such support.<sup>3</sup> Even the Bengalee, when it came to know about the enlarged scheme as foreshadowed by Curzon, wrote that the alternative plan would be much less objectionable as the Bengalis preferred the highly legalised system of Government to the personal rule as prevailed in Assam.<sup>4</sup> In November 1904, the Dacca Gazette published a letter from Babu Guru Ganga Aich Choudhuri, Editor of Gaurab, a monthly magazine, supporting the formation of a full-fledged province. The Babu wrote that if Dacca was made the capital of the new province, the city of Dacca would be revived from its moribund condition and a part of wealth hitherto concentrated in Calcutta would flow towards the new capital; new schools and colleges would spring up and the province would have its own newspapers and would no longer depend on Calcutta.<sup>5</sup> In another letter published in the same paper, the writer commented that it was foolish to think that partition would affect the national unity of the Bengalis. No such unity existed about fifty years ago and as the people of East Bengal looked down upon the Assamese, so did the West Bengalis regard the East Bengalis with contempt. The writer reminded <sup>his readers</sup> that even today the West Bengalis who were talking of Bengali nationality, denounced the East Bengalis as Bangals.<sup>6</sup> On 30 January 1905, Babu Guru Ganga Aich Choudhuri once again returned to his

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1. The Weekly Chronicle (Assam) - 20 Oct. 1903; B.N.N.R., No.44.
  2. The Nivedan (Calcutta) - 16 Dec. 1903; No.52; the Khulna Hitaishi (Khulna) - 13 Feb. 1904; Ibid., No.8.
  3. The Indian Mirror - 12 Feb. 1904; Ibid.
  4. The Bengalee - 26 Feb. 1904.
  5. The Dacca Gazette - 28 Nov. 1904; B.N.N.R., No.48.
  6. Ibid., 5 Dec. 1904; No.49.

support of the partition and asserted that after the assurance by the Government that the privileges enjoyed by the people such as the High Court and the Legislative Council would be retained the people of Chittagong "have become eager supporters of the partition scheme". He even contended that as soon as the advantages of the enlarged proposals were known to the people of East Bengal, meetings of protest were no longer noticeable in Chittagong. The Babu prayed that the Government should not be deceived by the "representations of the class of inconsiderate, sensation-loving men" who opposed the partition.<sup>1</sup> When it was known that the scheme had been accepted, the Education Gazette asking the agitators to accept it wrote that one of the advantages of the plan would be to bring the backward Assamese into the fold of the Bengalis who could introduce them to their language and civilise them. Thus West Bengal would remain in touch with Bihar and Orissa, and East Bengal with Assam. "Bengal alone is not enough for Bengalis", the paper added.<sup>2</sup> In its issue of 7 August 1905, the Dacca Gazette regarded the enlarged scheme much better than the original scheme and wrote that Curzon had acceded to a considerable extent to the popular demand.<sup>3</sup> The Sanjivani reported Fraser stating that he had received many representations from Hindus and Muslims favouring the scheme.<sup>4</sup> The Hitasadhak also supported the partition.<sup>5</sup>

In a pamphlet called the Partition of Bengal a Great Boon, the writer A.K. Ghosh dwelt upon the benefits of the scheme. He defended the partition as of great advantage to East Bengal. The writer asked the leaders of <sup>the</sup> agitation to realise that if instead of East Bengal, Bihar and Orissa would have been separated, it would have been disastrous for Bengalis

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1. Ibid., 30 Jan. 1905; No.6.

2. The Education Gazette (Chinsurah) - 28 July 1905; Ibid., No.31.

3. The Dacca Gazette - 7 Aug. 1905; Ibid., No.32. Also see the Hitavarta (Muradnagar) - 14 Aug. 1905; Ibid., No.34.

4. The Sanjivani - 10 Aug. 1905; Ibid., No.33.

5. The Hitasadhak (Alipore) - 12 Aug. 1905; Ibid.

as then the whole Bengali-speaking race would have been confined to the Bengali area. But now, Assam would be merged into Bengal and "swallowed up by East and North Bengal". As for Bengali commercial classes, their apprehension of loss of business was ill-founded. With the development of the Chittagong port, the country in and around it would be opened up and the industrial resources of the two provinces would be developed. Thus it would be a gain to the whole<sup>4</sup> Bengal and not a mere loss to Calcutta.

Ghosh asked the West Bengalis to realise the neglect with which the eastern districts had been treated in the past. As at the expense of the whole nation, a particular class of zamindars benefited under the Permanent system, so "at the expense of the whole race and province, people of a few districts have grown and developed". The result was that East Bengal remained undeveloped; the bar and the public services became the exclusive monopoly of the people of a few districts. Whereas so many institutions existed in towns, in particular in Calcutta and its neighbourhood, in East Bengal there was only one first grade college at Dacca. Taki, Uttarpara, Barasat, Diamond Harbour each could boast of a Government High School, whereas the High School at Barisal had been abolished. The writer added:

"In every branch of life, an East Bengal man has to work at a great disadvantage. It begins from school days and continues throughout his life. In College class the Bangal is made the butt of ridicule and banter. In practical life the difficulties which he encounters are insurmountable.... Go to the Mint, Post Office, ... High Court, Secretariat, you will find an inscription on the portals of those offices, "Bangals excommunicated". In the mercantile offices, there is a well organised secret conspiracy for the total exclusion of the Bangals."

How with such disparity, asked the writer could the claim of national solidarity<sup>4</sup> sustain? And if the uniformity of the language was the basis of the solidarity of the races,



then the creation of the new province would certainly not disrupt it, as Bengali would still remain the dominating language. By the creation of a new province, the works of Bankim Chandra and Rabindra Nath Tagore would not cease to be read in East Bengal and that of Nabiran Chandra in West Bengal.

Thus according to Ghosh, none need fear the consequences of the partition except the proprietors of newspapers and private colleges of Calcutta. These men, thought the writer, realised that the creation of the new province was bound to usher in a free and independent press which would reduce the circulation of the Calcutta newspapers. Similarly the establishment of educational institutions and a new University at Dacca, would tell upon the income of the proprietors of the colleges of Calcutta amongst whom Surendra Nath Banerjea was one. "Pray", wrote Ghosh, "do not lose heart that in the new Province the Mahommedans will get the upper hand in everything".<sup>1</sup>

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1. Ghosh, A.K., Partition of Bengal A Great Boon, 1905, J.& P. Dept., File 2450, Vol.769 of 1906. In another pamphlet, similar advantages of the partition scheme were pointed out by Chukerbutty. The writer thought that the agitators could advance no reason against the partition except a mere sentimental argument that the partition would affect the national unity. The writer tried to dispel the idea and quoted the Indian Mirror which wrote:  
 "How far the administrative separation will affect national unity is a question which may be left to time to illustrate, but the experience of the past will show that the fears of our countrymen regarding national separation will not be realized.... The Bengalis living in the other provinces of India are as much Bengali as ourselves inspite of their living under separate administrations. There are large colonies of Bengalis in the United Provinces who do not dis-own kinship with us and who join with us in every national movement.... The fears of a national separation therefore are groundless".  
 See Chukerbutty, D.B., Partition of Bengal, 1906, J. & P. Dept., File 1915, Vol.764 of 1906.

Before proceeding further, it will be relevant to examine the reasons that motivated the Government to take into consideration the special benefits of the scheme of partition accruing to the Muslims in the proposed province. In Bengal the Muslims, who constituted about thirty-two per cent of the total population of the province, lagged far behind the Hindus in opportunities for employment and advancement in different walks of life. This was due partly to their initial apathy to western education and partly to the dominant position of the Hindus. According to Hunter, one of the causes of Muslim indifference to education was the fact that instruction was conducted "in the vernacular of Bengal, a language which the educated Mohammedans" despised, and "by means of Hindu teachers, whom the whole Mohammedan community" hated.<sup>1</sup> After about twenty years of the publication of Hunter's book, Savage the Commissioner of Dacca Division, affirmed Hunter's exposition and wrote that one of the results that would follow from the creation of the province would be that

"the Musalmans, who form the great mass of the population, would have education offered to them in their vigorous mother tongue, Bengali, unhampered by the Sanskrit tendencies of the Hindus, who up to now have controlled and practically monopolized education in Bengal...."<sup>2</sup>

Whatever the causes of backwardness, the Muslims in Bengal, as pointed out by Denison Ross, the Principal of Calcutta Madrasah College, had "fallen far behind the Hindu community, not merely in the race for daily bread, but also in general cultivation and literary activity".<sup>3</sup> The number of Muslim students in the educational institutions, of Muslim employees in the various grades of services including those in which educational qualifications were relatively lower, and of

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1. Hunter, W.W., The Indian Musalmans, p.178.

2. Savage, Commr. Dacca Division to Govt. of Bengal - 1 Feb. 1904; P.L., 1905., para.11.

3. Denison Ross to Miller - Jan. 1904; C.C., Vol.209.

Muslim members in local and provincial bodies, was pitifully low. Such was the Bengali predominance in the services that the Muslims were virtually an "excluded class".<sup>1</sup>

The backward condition of the Muslim community was no secret to the officials administering the province. They were conscious of the handicaps under which the Muslims suffered and hoped that in the event of the formation of a new province, where the Muslims would form a majority, they "would obtain a greater share of the Government's attention than they had had since the East India Company acquired the Dewani of the Province".<sup>2</sup> They realised that in the past, the Muslims had failed to "receive the same consideration as the Hindus."<sup>3</sup>

And yet these considerations did not find any explicit expression in the earlier discussions leading to the scheme of 3 December 1903. Probably, this was because the transfer of about eleven million people to Assam, as originally planned, would not have made a substantial difference to the communal balance in East Bengal, but the amalgamation of a larger area, as now proposed, would create a Muslim majority in the proposed province. The earlier scheme of redistribution was of a limited nature; public criticism and certain specific objections to the plan caused the Government to expand its scope. Those objections were put forward by the public leaders of Bengal, both Hindus and Muslims. Had the root of the Government's intention been to set the Muslims against the Hindus as has been alleged by writers on the subject,<sup>4</sup> they would surely have put forward the enlarged plan in the first instance, as even then a political motive was not altogether absent from

1. See Appendix. 8.

2. Rankin, Magistrate of Dacca to Commr. Dacca Division - 28 Jan. 1904; P.L., 1905, para.3. Also see Streatfeild, Collector of Backergunj to Commr. Dacca Division - 1 Feb. 1904; Ibid., para.10.

3. Thompson, Magistrate of Mymensingh to Commr. Dacca Division - 5 Feb. 1904; Ibid., para.5.

4. Majumdar, R.C., History of the Freedom Movement in India, Vol.II, pp.4-5. Also see Gopal, R., Indian Muslims, A Political History (1858-1947), pp.91-2.

the minds of higher officials. On the other hand, after they had produced the original scheme, there would have been no need to expand it, if the Government of India had not been led to believe that the final scheme would be better than the plan of 3 December 1903. Moreover, the district officials who touched upon the problem of the benefits of the scheme to the Muslims did not talk of any political advantage of the proposals though they could easily have referred to it, as had been pointed out once before in 1896 by Oldham, the Commissioner of Chittagong Division. In his speech at Dacca, Curzon also tactlessly referred to some of the advantages of the scheme. It is possible that his exposition was not made simply in order to win the Muslim community but also because he was replying to an address presented by the Muslim community of Dacca referring to the backward condition and asking for the formation of a full-fledged province.

Nevertheless neither Fraser, nor Risley, and not even Curzon were immune from taking into consideration the obvious political advantage of a move which would reduce the Bengalis in both the provinces to a minority. To diminish the influence and predominance of the educated Bengalis, whom the Government regarded as the opponents of their rule, was certainly one of the many objects of the scheme.

However, the ultimate aim was not to set one community against the other. How the English officialdom looked upon the question of "divide and rule" comes out best in a note of Fraser, who while discussing the relations between Hindus and Muslims wrote:

"It is altogether contrary to the interests of Government to encourage jealousy between different classes. The policy of "Divide et impera" is one which, in my judgment, is entirely inconsistent with the principles of our policy in India. It is a sound principle when it refers to enemies; it is absolutely unsound when it refers to fellow-subjects of the same King. It is utterly wrong to set one class against another, or to lean upon one class for the sake of repressing another. What the British Government has

always aimed at, and ought to aim at, is justly and, as far as possible, effectively to advance the interests of all sections of the community. It would be wrong to advance the interests of the Mahommedans at the expense of the Hindus, or of the Hindus at the expense of the Mahommedans, or of any section of the community at the expense of any other. I most certainly think that the interests of the Mahommedans have in some respects not been carefully considered in this part of India; and I consider that the interests of both Hindus and Mahommedans in certain parts of the province have not been adequately considered. We must give full consideration to these comparatively neglected interests. But we must do so, not because we want in any way to injure any other section of the community, but because we want to do justice to all. Care must be taken lest on account of any action taken by certain members of one section of the community we are induced to favour another; but on the other hand care should be taken lest under the influence of reaction we abandon a policy which is animated only by justice. At the present time, for example, the Mahommedans are inspired with the hope that justice is to be done to them in regard to their reasonable aspirations. They ask for justice; they now expect it; and it will be very disastrous to allow it for a moment to appear that, owing to Hindu pressure, the policy of giving just treatment to both creeds is in danger." 1

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1. Fraser's Note - 25 March 1907; Encl. in Fraser to Minto - 28 March 1907; Minto Papers, M 980. M.N.Das, while maintaining that Hindu-Muslim differences in India were the result of the British policy alone, has referred to the opinions of various administrators invited by Minto on the question. Surprisingly enough the views of almost all the heads of local governments find a mention in Das's study while Fraser's note has been singled out to be dropped. In order to lend weight to his argument, Das even goes as far as to mention that the agitation in the Punjab against the Colonisation Bill was organised by the Muslims, which is not a fact. He even asserts that Minto "stepped down to win over the Punjab Moslems" and therefore withheld his assent to the Bill. See Das, M.N., India under Morley and Minto, pp.155-60.

A Special Committee<sup>1</sup> was appointed by the India Council to examine the Government of India's case. Sir Steuart Bayley, a member of the Council, while believing that the Government had "arrived at the wisest solution", criticised the manner in which the scheme had been "evolved bit by bit". The objections and the criticism offered by public bodies related to the original plan while the Council was dealing with a different one. He therefore, recommended that it should be made public. He concurred with the Government of India in its decision not to recommend a Governor and Council for Bengal, though he was not convinced by their argument that if Bengal was given a Council it might become a source of intrigue. He admitted, however, that "a man of strong Congress proclivities might, as member of the Lieutenant-Governor's Council, make things eminently uncomfortable for his chief" and thought that such a "remedy would be worse than the disease". He agreed with Curzon in attributing the agitation against the proposal "to the wire-pulling of influential and interested agitators in Calcutta" but believed that the discontent was "real and inevitable". "If Calcutta is the centre of political agitation for them", he noted, "it is also the centre to which they look for educational, literary, linguistic, and commercial life. It is the centre to which in legal and business matters they have powerful and material attachments as well as sentimental ones".<sup>2</sup>

Lee-Warner, another member of the Council, while admitting the need to relieve the Bengal Government and opposing the idea of a Council, recommended "decentralisation on the Sind precedent" on account of the enormous expenditure which the Government of India's proposal would entail.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Lee-Warner, C.J. Lyall, D. Fitzpatrick, P. Hutchins and S. Bayley were probably the members of the Committee.
  2. Bayley's Note - 9 March 1905; J. & P. Dept., File 413, Vol. 709 of 1905.
  3. Lee-Warner's Note - 12 April 1905; Ibid. Also see his note of 10 May 1905; Ibid.

The Special Committee prepared a draft despatch which was duly approved by the Judicial and Public Committee on 11 May 1905. The draft shows that the Committee was not inclined to accept the Government of India's proposals without further examination. Notwithstanding the advantages of the scheme, the Committee was impressed by the dislike of the proposal both in Bengal and Assam and was not wholly convinced by the Government of India's contention that this unpopularity was the result of agitation by a small educated minority only. The draft recommended that Orissa and Chota Nagpur might be administered on the pattern of Sind and suggested the appointment of a commission to examine the whole question. Such a scheme, in their opinion, would be free from the objections raised by the Government of India that these territories, if carved out as Commissioner's provinces, would have to borrow their officials, as then the commissions would belong to the same province. A scheme on the pattern of Sind would also guarantee the transfers of officers, as well as their chances of promotion to higher positions within the province. The Committee felt that if the Government of India found that the pressure on Bengal Government would be reduced through the suggested plan, then the question of the transfer of such territories as warranted by the interests of the future development of Assam could be reconsidered. They thought that Assam's interests might be adequately served by transferring the Chittagong Division alone. The Committee was prepared to reconsider the original scheme if the Government of India still adhered to it. They had, however, no objection to the transfer of Sambalpur and its states, and the Hindi-speaking states of Chota Nagpur.<sup>1</sup>

The despatch was not sent. Instead, Brodrick, on 20 May 1905, informed Curzon in a telegram that his Council had suggested putting Orissa and Chota Nagpur under Commissioners on the pattern of Sind and asked if such a plan had been

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1. Draft Despatch - 11 May 1905; Ibid., paras. 11-8.

considered by the Government of India.<sup>1</sup> On 24 May 1905, Curzon reported that Brodrick's suggestion, which he regarded as a "bombshell", had not been considered seriously as it was deemed impracticable; that the plan to place Orissa and Chota Nagpur under a Chief Commissioner had been examined but rejected; the idea had not appealed to the Government as it would not have brought adequate relief to Bengal; it would have hampered the progress and development of Assam and would have been opposed by the Lieutenant-Governor and the Civil Service. Moreover, in the words of the telegram,

"It would tend to consolidate the Bengali element by detaching it from outside factors and would produce the very effect that we desire to avoid. The best guarantee of the political advantage of our proposal is its dislike by the Congress Party."<sup>2</sup>

On 26 May 1905, Brodrick circulated Curzon's telegram to the members of the Committee and persuaded them to accept the proposals of the Government of India.<sup>3</sup> He made "a personal appeal" to the members to throw away the original draft.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Sec. of State to Gov-Gen. - 20 May 1905; (Telegram), C.C., Vol.175.
  2. Gov-Gen. to Sec. of State - 24 May 1905; (Telegram), Ibid., On 26 Jan. 1905, Godley had written to Curzon that "the opposition of the Congress Party will of course help matters considerably, so far as our Council is concerned". See Godley to Curzon - 26 Jan. 1905; C.C., Vol.164. Also see Curzon to Brodrick - 23 March 1905; Ibid.
  3. Brodrick's Note - 26 May 1905; J. & P. Dept., File 413, op.cit. In this note Brodrick observed that he gathered from the expressions of the Committee that if the Govt. of India were averse to the suggestions of the Committee, the scheme might as well be accepted. Brodrick therefore questioned the advisability of wasting time in forwarding the views of the Committee which he felt sure to be rejected.
  4. Brodrick to Ampthill - 9 June 1905; Ampthill Collection, Vol.11. Also see Godley to Curzon - 26 May & 30 May 1905; & Brodrick to Curzon - 2 & 9 June 1905; C.C., Vol.164. Also see Brodrick's Cabinet Minute - 30 Sept. 1905; Cab. 1.6. Folio 356., Public Records Office.
- Bayley was definitely against accepting the Government of India's proposal. This comes out clearly from Bayley's letter to Lyall in which he wrote that Curzon had treated

continued on following page



On 9 June 1905, the Secretary of State approved the partition plan, but not without hesitation and criticism of the Government of India's scheme. He noticed that the plan in its final shape had not been put before the public "though enough of its general effect has become known to create considerable popular feeling" in Bengal. Neither did he "undervalue the strength and substance" of the opposition, as, out of forty-one and a half million of Bengali-speaking people with Calcutta "as their centre of culture and political and commercial life", three fifths or twenty-four and a half million were being transferred to the new province, "involving the severance of old and historic ties and the breaking up of racial unity". He pointed out also that the people of Assam, on their part, did not appear to be completely satisfied with the prospect of being absorbed by the Bengalis in the new province. The Secretary of State, while accepting the scheme, expressed his disappointment that the Government of India had rejected the idea of delegating powers through Commissioners, an alternative which, he believed, could bring about the desired objects of the plan. He recommended, however, the constitution of a Board of Revenue instead of a Financial

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fn. 4 continued from previous page

the Commissionership idea as proposed by the Committee "somewhat cavalierly". He therefore urged that the plan on the Sind pattern should be thrashed out before accepting the proposal, not because it was of "urgent consideration", but because he thought "the partition of Bengal to be in itself a bad thing" as it implied "unquestionable injury on the people of Bengal & will be long & keenly resented". He compared Curzon's view of the advantages of the scheme based on its dislike by the Congress as "investing in Panama shares pour embeter les Anglais" and found little wisdom in a policy dictated by "dislikes" and "prejudices". "To do an injury" he observed, "because it will be specially distasteful to the Congress party is surely not sound administration". See Bayley to Lyall - 31 May 1905; J. & P. Dept. File 413. op.cit.

Commissioner for the new province and preferred "Eastern Bengal and Assam" as its name. He also suggested the creation of a separate Commissionership for the Surma Valley and hill districts. Before the scheme was to be put into operation, the Secretary of State desired to know the cost of Government buildings at the new capital, the net savings in the old province, and also the arrangements for the allocation of the staff.<sup>1</sup>

Although the acceptance of the partition scheme had not been announced officially, rumours were afloat in Bengal that it had received the Secretary of State's sanction. The newspapers sounded a note of warning urging that the agitation must be continued.<sup>2</sup> The Bengalee, somehow deduced that there was a divergence of opinion between Curzon and Brodrick on the issue and that Brodrick was not inclined to separate the eastern districts. The paper advocated the presentation of a memorial.<sup>3</sup> The Peoples' Association of Dacca sent a telegram to the Secretary of State requesting him to suspend a decision and stating its intention of submitting a memorial against the plan.<sup>4</sup>

It was in view of the renewed agitation that Curzon made ready to take necessary measures for the execution of the project. The prospects of a change in Ministry in England also made it imperative to carry it out without more delay.<sup>5</sup> Besides,

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1. Sec. of State to Gov-Gen. - 9 June 1905; P.D., 1905, Vol.26, paras. 8,9,11,12,14-17.
  2. The Bengalee - 31 May, & 22 June 1905. Also see the Sanjivani - 22 June 1905; The Daily Hitavadi - 23 June 1905; the Dacca Gazette - 26 June 1905; B.N.N.R., No.25.
  3. The Bengalee - 11, 29 & 30 June 1905; the Sanjivani - 29 June 1905, & the Charu Mihir - 29 June 1905; B.N.N.R., No.27.
  4. President, Peoples' Association Dacca to Sec. of State - 26 June 1905; J. & P. Dept., File 1845, Vol.724 of 1905.
  5. The Bengalee hoped that the Liberal Government which was expected soon to be in power, would not support the project. See the Bengalee - 31 May & 8 July 1905.

Curzon was being spurred on by Fraser, who believed that an "early settlement would tend to peace".<sup>1</sup> In addition to these factors, the forthcoming tour of the Prince of Wales also necessitated the solution of a problem which was not without anxiety to the Government.

In order to minimise the chances of an agitation, Curzon desired that the announcement of the acceptance of the proposals should take place simultaneously with the creation of the new province. For this reason the decision about the proposals was not officially announced for about a month and, when the news did come, it emanated from the Secretary of State and not the Government of India. The sanction did not, however, remain a secret for long. On 4 July 1905, Herbert Roberts, a member of Parliament, told the Secretary of State in the House of Commons that "an influentially signed" memorial was being submitted by the Bengalis and questioned if the Secretary of State would postpone the decision until the petition had been considered. Brodrick announced that he had already communicated the acceptance of the scheme to the Government of India.<sup>2</sup> Reuter carried the news to India. The Pioneer of 6 July 1905 wrote what had earlier appeared in the Bengali press, that the proposals had met with the approval of the Secretary of State.<sup>3</sup> The news created alarm. The Bengalee under the caption "A Grave National Disaster" published two leaders in its issues of 7 and 8 July 1905. It told the people that the decision about the partition was the work of "a tottering Cabinet" and of a Viceroy whose tenure of office could "be counted by months". It urged them to carry out an agitation to get the scheme reversed.<sup>4</sup> It also reproduced the memorial said to have been signed by 70,000 people,

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1. Fraser to Curzon - 6 June 1905; C.C., Vol.210.

2. Speech of Roberts - 4 July 1905; 148, H.C.Debs., 4s, cols. 972-3. On 5 June 1905, Roberts had also questioned the Sec. of State about the proposals. 147, H.C.Debs., 4s, cols.701.

3. The Pioneer - 6 July 1905.

4. The Bengalee - 7 July 1905.

protesting against the scheme.<sup>1</sup> During the course of a meeting held on 7 July 1905 in the Calcutta Town Hall, in connection with the forthcoming tour of the Prince of Wales, A. Chaudhuri a prominent Congressman and leading lawyer of Calcutta, referred to the partition and deplored the decision. On 8 July 1905, Babu Bhupendra Nath Basu, and Ambica Charan Mazumdar, members of the Bengal Legislative Council, condemned the action of the Government in their speeches.<sup>2</sup> Like the Bengali press, the Anglo-Indian newspapers did not take kindly to the scheme. The Englishman of 8 July 1905 called the arrangement "painfully unsymmetrical and inartistic" and compared the partition with "the parcelling out of France into departments". It felt as if the partition meant pulling "the British constitution to pieces".<sup>3</sup> The Pioneer Mail pointed out the expensive nature of the project and was of the view that the way the question had been handled by the Government would cause the maximum of opposition.<sup>4</sup>

Since the news about the sanction had become public property, it was necessary to acquaint the public with the details of the proposal. Curzon was, however, against the publication of the despatch as it contained much that had been "merely introduced in order to persuade or convince the Secretary of State". Further, a detailed statement would scarcely have been helpful to the Government in easing the introduction of the scheme. "The more we say, the greater will be the anger and commotion".<sup>5</sup> Curzon added "It is useless to attempt to persuade Bengal. The fait accompli is the only

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1. Ibid., 8 July 1905. Two memorials were received by the India Office, one on 31 July & the other on 1/2 Aug. 1905 - the latter was said to have been signed by about 60,000 people. (The signatures ran into four volumes, one of the volumes is preserved in the I.O.L.) See J. & P. Dept., File 2341, Vol.728 of 1905.
  2. The Bengalee - 9 July 1905.
  3. The Englishman - 8 July 1905.
  4. The Pioneer Mail - 14 July 1905.
  5. Curzon's Note - 24 June 1905; Calcutta Records - I. Home Dept., Public A Procs. C.C., Vol.247, pp.10-11.

argument that will appeal to them". It was therefore decided to present the subject in a resolution which did not contain too many details, for a "long Resolution will merely provide material for hundreds of scribes for scores of weeks."<sup>1</sup>

In spite of Curzon's earlier instruction, the resolution on the partition, as originally drafted by Risley, seems to have contained much that was undesirable from the Government's point of view. Though the original draft has disappeared, Curzon's remarks make it clear that it was not liked, as he wrote that it exposed "the changes of opinions of the Lieutenant-Governor" and the criticism of Fuller, and described the proposals as controversial. The resolution also included passages about the future jurisdiction of the High Court, which, in Curzon's opinion, "would produce a storm". Above all it failed "entirely to do justice to the reasons which led the Government of India to undertake so great a change, and the feelings and aims with which they now order its execution".<sup>2</sup> Curzon destroyed the original "appalling draft Resolution" as he called it, which "would once more have set the heather ablaze",<sup>3</sup> and instead, himself composed a new draft which was published in the Gazette of India of 19 July 1905.<sup>4</sup>

The impatient Viceroy hurried to complete the measures necessary to put the scheme into effect. The working out of the details of savings, the preparation of the estimates for the buildings, the allocation of officers, would have needed thorough enquiry which would have delayed the operation of the plan, and this the Government was most anxious to avoid.<sup>5</sup>

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1. Ibid.

2. Curzon's Note - 14 July 1905; Ibid., p.21.

3. Curzon to Fraser - 24 July 1905; C.C., Vol.211. Also see Curzon to Fuller - 24 July 1905, Ibid., & Curzon's Note - 14 July 1905; op.cit.

4. Resolution of the Government of India - 19 July 1905; Notification No.2491. P.P., Cd. No.2658. The Bengalee of 20 July 1905, and the Pioneer Mail of 21 July 1905, published the resolution in their issues.

5. Stokes' Note - 26 June 1905. Calcutta Records I. Home Dept. Public A Procs., C.C., Vol.247. Also see Curzon's Note - 30 June 1905. Ibid.

Hence the estimates of the new buildings, put at ten lakhs of rupees, and that of the Surma Valley Commissionership at Rs.48,000 a year, were worked out hurriedly. The constitution of a Board of Revenue instead of a Financial Commissioner, and the name of the province suggested by the Secretary of State, were accepted by the Government without hesitation. These details were communicated to Brodrick on 10 July 1905, with a request that the Government of India should be authorised to proceed with the plan.<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile Curzon fore-armed himself against any sabotage. He had heard from Barnes, a member of the India Council, that several members at the India Office desired to postpone the actual carrying out of the project for a year or two until necessary buildings were constructed to house the new Government at Dacca.<sup>2</sup> The Bengali leaders and press were busy stirring up trouble and the Secretary of State had already been deluged with telegrams, urging him to suspend the scheme.<sup>3</sup>

Curzon wasted no time. He submitted the name of Bamfylde Fuller as the future Lieutenant-Governor of the new province and asked him to buckle to his "task with characteristic intrepidity".<sup>4</sup> Fuller though himself preferring the United Provinces which he called "the seats of patricians", "instead of fighting with beasts in the arena below", promised to do his best in what he called a "difficult and thankless position".<sup>5</sup> He hastened to Dacca to see for himself the

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1. Gov-Gen. to Sec. of State - 10 July 1905; (Telegram), C.C., Vol.175.

2. Barnes to Curzon - 28 July 1905; C.C., Vol.183. Also see Barnes to Curzon - 4 Aug. 1905; Ibid.

3. See Maharaja of Natore, Nawab of Bogra & others to Sec. of State - 22 July 1905; J. & P. Dept. File 2179, Vol.727 of 1905; Maharaja of Mymensingh to Sec. of State - 23 July 1905; File 2211, Ibid., & Maharaja of Cossimbazar to Sec. of State - 27 July 1905; Ibid., File 2257.

4. Curzon to Fuller - 24 July 1905; C.C., Vol.211.

5. Fuller to Curzon - 29 July 1905; Ibid.

arrangements for the installation of the new Government and reported that accommodation could be provided for certain officers but not for a "full Secretariat and departmental officers". However, he thought that a branch Secretariat and departmental officers could be accommodated within two months as a makeshift arrangement until a permanent Government House was built at Dacca.<sup>1</sup> Apparently the establishment of full-fledged machinery for the Government in such a short time was difficult. But Curzon had to satisfy Brodrick about the arrangements. He therefore telegraphed to Brodrick that "very suitable accommodation can be provided in existing houses" for members of the Board of Revenue, their offices and the Government Secretariat, and that a temporary Government House could be built for the Lieutenant-Governor.<sup>2</sup>

Curzon was in a great hurry. He had already proposed to introduce the Partition Bill in the Council on 8 September 1905, and put the scheme into operation by 16 October 1905. He did not even think it necessary to get the Bill examined by the Local Governments concerned as he did not expect them to suggest any alterations. These tactics, he justified by considerations of urgency which he explained thus:

"It is, in our judgement, most desirable that the scheme of re-construction should be brought into force with the least possible delay, since to defer it would be to afford opportunities for the renewal ... of an agitation which would be none the less harmful because it would be fruitless." 3

The Government of India's letter together with the Bill and the Proclamations reached the India Office on 21 August 1905. The Bill had to be approved by the Revenue, Financial and Legal departments of the India Office. The Proclamation also required the Royal assent. These formalities

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1. Fuller to Govt. of India - 7 Aug. 1905; (Telegram), I.H.P.P., 1905, Vol.7048, Proc. 240.
  2. Gov-Gen. to Sec. of State - 18 Aug. 1905; C.C., Vol.175.
  3. Gov.Gen. to Sec. of State - 3 Aug. 1905; P.L., 1905, paras. 3, 6-8.

were to be carried out within eighteen days of the receipt of the Government of India's letter. Obviously, the time allowed for these duties to be carried out was very short. The Judicial and Public Department therefore thought that it would be much better if the matter could be examined thoroughly by the respective departments. However, in view of the "very strong and obvious reasons for carrying out the necessary legislation at Simla",<sup>1</sup> the India Office machinery was set to work at great speed in order to meet the wishes of the Government of India. The Finance Committee had no observations to make.<sup>2</sup> The Judicial and Public Committee found the Bill correct and advised that the Government of India should be given authorisation to proceed with the Bill.<sup>3</sup> The Secretary of State ordered the proclamation to be prepared at once for the King's signature,<sup>4</sup> and the Council approved of the proceedings on 24 August 1905. The Royal assent was obtained within four days. Thus the India Office and the King had completed the necessary steps within a week. The Government of India received authorisation to proceed,<sup>5</sup> issued the Partition Proclamation on 1 September 1905, and introduced the Bill at the Simla Session of the Legislative Council.<sup>6</sup>

While Curzon was busy in getting the partition plan put into effect, he was at the same time passing through the most anxious and certainly the most ominous moments of his viceroyalty. With the receipt of Brodrick's despatch on 9 June 1905, the partition battle had been nearly won. The other front which Curzon was attempting to tackle, over the Military Administration controversy was more formidable and difficult, and even his oft-repeated threats of resignation could not

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1. Note by Asstt. Sec. of State - 22 Aug. 1905; J. & P. Dept. File 2556, Vol. 730 of 1905.

2. Note by Finance Committee - 24 Aug. 1905; Ibid.

3. Note by J. & P. Committee, Ibid.

4. Brodrick's Note - 22 Aug. 1905. Ibid.

5. Sec. of State to Gov-Gen. 29 Aug. 1905; (Telegram), C.C., Vol. 175.

6. The Bengalee of 10 Sept. 1905 deprecated the holding of the session at Simla.



save him from the impending disaster. The Kitchener-Curzon controversy - "the battle of the giants" as Godley called it, does not belong to our study. Suffice it to say that Kitchener decided to be his own master and abolish the Military Member and his department. This Curzon would not allow and he made it known to Brodrick that he was not prepared to submit. However, he did not find support from the home government who in a despatch of 31 May 1905, rejected Curzon's proposals on the controversy. Curzon offered his resignation.<sup>1</sup> Brodrick, however, was not sure how genuine Curzon's offer to resign was. "If only people ... could know", he wrote to Ampthill, "that the threat of resignation loses force by continual repetition, they would be very chary of using that sacred but last 'pièce de résistance'".<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, Curzon did use this "last pièce de résistance" in all seriousness and repeated his decision to resign.<sup>3</sup>

Curzon's protests did not stop at the Secretary of State or the Prime Minister, but went beyond them to Balmoral. He had done this before whenever he found his way blocked by his constitutional superiors. He had protested to the King and his private Secretary Knollys against placing the cost of entertaining the Indian princes as coronation guests in England on the Indian revenues<sup>4</sup> and had had the point conceded by Balfour.<sup>5</sup> He had approached the King to intervene when he wished to announce a remission of the Salt Tax at the time of the Indian Durbar,<sup>6</sup> and had threatened to resign.<sup>7</sup> When the

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1. Gov-Gen. to Balfour - 26 June 1905; (Telegram), C.C., Vol. 175.
  2. Brodrick to Ampthill - 30 June 1905; Ampthill Collection, Vol. 11.
  3. Gov-Gen. to Sec. of State - 5, & 12 Aug. 1905; (Telegrams), C.C., Vol. 175. Mosley's account that Curzon's ultimatum to Balfour about resignation was not serious, is not convincing. See Mosley, L., Curzon, The End of an Epoch, pp. 98-9.
  4. Curzon to Knollys - 30 July 1902; C.C., Vol. 136.
  5. Curzon to King - 13 Aug. 1902; Ibid.
  6. Viceroy to Knollys - 15 Nov. 1902. (Telegram), Ibid.
  7. Curzon to King - 27 Nov. 1902; Ibid.

Home Government refused his requests he reprimanded them and wrote to Knollys:

"You know how hopelessly perverse and wrong they [the India Council] were about that [the Coronation expenses] ... I assure you emphatically and confidently that they are equally short-sighted and wrong now.... I have no more doubt that we here are right and that the India Council in London is irredeemably wrong, than I have that the earth is round or the sun is incandescent".<sup>1</sup>

Whether Curzon was right or wrong did not matter much in the present controversy, as even the King regarded Kitchener as "a man of such importance" that he advised Curzon to accept the decision of the Cabinet.<sup>2</sup> But Curzon did not stop. He appealed to the King and stressed the shattered state of his health and the recent worries he had received, "enough to produce a complete breakdown".<sup>3</sup> He regretted that he had come back to India and his letters reveal the desperate state of his mind. "All the worry", he wrote to Knollys, "of the past few weeks - with my resignation pending ... has told upon me so that my old malady has returned in the form of a violent attack ... with terrible pains shooting down the nerves of my leg".<sup>4</sup>

Brodrick's attack was successful; he had shot down his target. With the King's message, Curzon was no longer in suspense; the protests and pathetic appeals had failed. "With deep regret" wrote the King, "I have no other alternative but to accept your resignation at your urgent request. Most warmly do I thank you for your invaluable services to your Sovereign and your Country and especially to the Indian Empire. Most sincerely do I hope that your health may improve."<sup>5</sup>

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1. Curzon to Knollys - 12 Nov. 1902; Ibid.

2. King to Curzon - 2 June 1905; Ibid.

3. Curzon to King - 6 July 1905; Ibid.

4. Curzon to Knollys - 12 July 1905; Ibid.

5. King to Curzon - 22 Aug. 1905; Ibid. Mosley gives the date of the King's communication as 16 Aug. 1905 which is wrong. See Mosley, op.cit., p.123. On 16 Aug. 1905, the resignation was not accepted but communicated to the King for his sanction. See Fraser, L., op.cit., p.446. Also see Ronaldshay, Vol.II, p.387.

Meanwhile, Brodrick, Curzon's friend of long standing, whom he used to address as "My dear old boy", had spared no pains to drive Curzon out of office as quickly as possible. Even before the King's acceptance of Curzon's resignation, Brodrick had hastened to press Balfour to select Curzon's successor.<sup>1</sup> He would have liked Ampthill to take over from Curzon pending Lord Minto's arrival.<sup>2</sup> Curzon had set his heart on welcoming the Prince of Wales for whose reception he had made officially the necessary arrangements, and he was "miserable at the thought of leaving this task to another".<sup>3</sup> The King was prepared to gratify Curzon's wishes and yet, as is clear from the correspondence between Brodrick and Balfour, the former spared no effort to put obstructions in Curzon's way. Code words were used in referring to the chief actors in the drama in the correspondence between the Prime Minister and Secretary of State to prevent Brodrick's tactics being detected. Balfour himself seems to have been inclined to let Curzon receive the Prince, and when pressed by Brodrick he wrote:

"It seems difficult to resist Baden's [the King's] wishes unless a clear case can be made out for statement that Hawick's [Minto's] position will suffer".

He also pointed out that it was difficult not to allow Curzon to remain, on account of "the most recent precedent" of Lord Elgin having taken four months to make over charge to Curzon.<sup>4</sup> But Brodrick found another argument and represented that official business was getting into arrears on account of "Curzon's remaining so long after his resignation".<sup>5</sup> However,

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1. Brodrick to Balfour - 13 Aug. 1905; Balfour Papers. No. 49721. B.M.
  2. Sec. of State to Gov-Gen. - 19 Aug. 1905; (Telegram), C.C., Vol.175.
  3. Curzon to Knollys - 16 Aug. 1905; Ibid., Vol.136.
  4. Balfour to Brodrick - 19 Sept. 1905; Balfour Papers, No. 49721, B.M.
  5. Brodrick to Balfour - 21 Sept. 1905; Ibid. Also see Brodrick to Knollys - 22 Sept. 1905; Middleton Papers, No.50072, B.M.

this did not carry any weight with the King who, in "face of considerable opposition and after laborious correspondence", and by "personal intervention", found a way out of a "hopeless situation"<sup>1</sup> and allowed Curzon to receive the Prince officially at Bombay,<sup>2</sup> though Brodrick had drafted a telegram only permitting Curzon to "be received in a private capacity" by the Prince at Bombay, Aden or Suez.<sup>3</sup> "Deserted by all, or nearly all" Curzon found the gesture of his King consoling.<sup>4</sup>

Brodrick was annoyed. He had already been hurt by the warm message which the King had sent to Curzon in accepting his resignation. The King wanted to honour Curzon with a title.<sup>5</sup> But Brodrick undermined the move, writing to Balfour that

"he whom his Sovereign delights to honour, will be the aggrieved party, and that I on behalf of the Government, or you, will have to open a number of rather dark doors as to his conduct during the last twelve months".<sup>6</sup>

Earlier, Brodrick had impressed upon Balfour that neither Lansdowne nor Elgin were rewarded at once and that "if George is elevated before all this has blown over, it will be regarded as a pretty severe snub to the Ministry apart from myself...". He continued, "The whole official world would, I think, condemn us, if you do not prevail as to deferring the honour".<sup>7</sup> The King, he thought, had "evidently committed himself";<sup>8</sup> still Brodrick continued to oppose it.<sup>9</sup> Apparently he would not have succeeded, had Curzon followed the King's advice "not to wash one's dirty linen in public"

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1. King to Curzon - 28 Sept. 1905; (Telegram) C.C., Vol.136.
  2. Knollys to Curzon - 21 Sept. 1905; (Telegram), Ibid.
  3. Sec. of State to Gov-Gen. - 14 Sept. 1905; (Telegram), Balfour Papers, No.49721, B.M.
  4. Curzon to Knollys - 11 Oct. 1905; C.C., Vol.136.
  5. Balfour to Brodrick - 15 Oct. 1905. Balfour Papers, No. 49721, B.M.
  6. Ibid.
  7. Brodrick to Balfour - 12 Sept, 1905; Ibid.
  8. Brodrick to Balfour - 14 Sept. 1905; Ibid.
  9. Brodrick to Balfour - 4 & 18 Oct. 1905. Also see Balfour to Brodrick - 15 Oct. 1905; Ibid.

and remained quiet after his return to England, - a course which the King thought necessary "in the interests of the British Empire at large and especially as regards India ...".<sup>1</sup> Brodrick's jealousy and lack of magnanimity towards his defeated enemy is illustrated further by the fact that he asked Balfour not to receive Curzon at the railway station on Curzon's return to England. "If our colleagues", he wrote to Balfour, "go to meet him, it will add to the belief that the main quarrel is personal".<sup>2</sup>

Brodrick's attitude to the partition question was no different. The partition issue and the Kitchener-Curzon controversy were in progress simultaneously. It was on 26 May 1905, that Brodrick appealed to his Council to accept the partition plan, and it received sanction on 9 June 1905. The despatch rejecting the Government of India's scheme on the Military administration dispute was issued on 31 May 1905. The partition despatch shows that Brodrick had accepted the scheme grudgingly, possibly against his own judgement and certainly against the protests of some of the members of his Council. He had failed to go into the different sides of the question, and the only enquiry which he made, and that by telegram, was about the Commissionership proposal. This carried little weight in view of an earlier communication from him promising Curzon to do his best to "back the Indian Government's proposal" and get it approved if Curzon was opposed to the recommendations of the India Council.<sup>3</sup> Whether or not Curzon would have accepted the suggestions of the India Council, Brodrick had already made his telegram of 20 May 1905 ineffectual by his previous promise of help. When the reply did come from Curzon, Brodrick apologetically offered an explanation of the telegram:

1. King to Viceroy - 15 Sept. 1905; C.C., Vol.136.
2. Brodrick to Balfour - 20 Nov. 1905; Balfour Papers, No.49721, B.M.
3. Brodrick to Curzon - 12 May 1905; C.C., Vol.164.

"I wanted to know what you felt, because otherwise it was useless for me to embark on a very heavy battle to endeavour to get a change in the despatch, as drafted and sent up to me.... I can do all that lies in my power to obtain a change." 1

How Curzon felt about his own proposals was well known to Brodrick. He had impressed upon the Secretary of State the importance of the proposals and had been urging him to ensure an early acceptance. Brodrick seems to have been playing a dubious game. On the one hand, on the suggestion of his Council, he made a query, on the other he conveyed the impression to Curzon that the scheme would be accepted. He obtained sanction for the scheme from the Council and yet retained in the despatch a strong expression of the divergence of views between the Government of India and his Council. Even about two months after the acceptance of the plan, Brodrick brought up the partition issue in a telegram which he could have easily avoided. He wrote:

"I have learned your decision to resign with very deep regret. Throughout your administration since your appointment as Governor-General in 1898, my Colleagues and I have endeavoured to give you constant support in the many measures of administrative reform which you have initiated including the partition of Bengal, upon which we recently adopted your proposals". 2

This telegram, which Brodrick made public, confirmed the doubts in India that the partition scheme had been accepted with hesitation. Already the newspapers in Bengal had begun to say that since the Home Government had rejected the re-organization of the Military Department, they had agreed to accept the partition project in order to propitiate Curzon.<sup>3</sup> The Daily Hitavadi wrote that the apprehension that the Secretary of State would "partially rehabilitate Lord Curzon's

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1. Brodrick to Curzon - 26 May 1905; Ibid.

2. Sec. of State to Gov-Gen.-16 Aug. 1905; (Telegram), C.C., Vol.175.

3. The Bengalee - 29 June 1905.

lost prestige" by accepting the partition proposals has proved true.<sup>1</sup> The Charu Mihir announced that Brodrick had thwarted Curzon over Tibet and the Army Administration question and had, therefore, "sought to please the Viceroy by accepting the partition scheme".<sup>2</sup> After the publication of Brodrick's telegram of 16 August 1905, it was generally believed in Bengal that the partition had been sanctioned "merely to humour Lord Curzon",<sup>3</sup> and that it was "a sop to Cerberus over the project of military administration".<sup>4</sup>

Could it be that Brodrick conceded the partition to Curzon because he was determined not to give in on the Military Administration question? Godley's is the only evidence supporting the point: ~~where~~ he described Curzon's partition as "a complete blunder" and stated that it was accepted under unusual circumstances. The experts in the India Council, he wrote, were rather weak and though they did not like the plan, "they were not the men to stand up against it and make their voices heard". Furthermore, wrote Godley, "Middleton, who

"had no strong opinion one way or another on the merits, made no secret of the fact that he was very anxious not to veto the proposal or refer it back, for the simple reason that he was already having a deadly struggle with Curzon over the Military Member question, and intended to overrule him on that. When the time came; he was therefore all the more desirous of avoiding another great row, and I remember his giving me definite instruction to do all I could to get the Council to accept Curzon's scheme?" 5

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1. The Daily Hitavadi - 7 July 1905; B.N.N.R., No.28.
  2. The Charu Mihir - 11 July 1905; Ibid., No.29.
  3. The Indian Nation - 28 Aug. 1905; Ibid., No.35.
  4. The Bengalee - 29 Aug. 1905.
  5. Lord Kilbracken to Hardinge - 10 Feb. 1912; H.P., Vol.92. U.L.C. In 1912, Godley called partition a blunder but how different were his views in 1905 appear from his letters to Curzon when he found himself "in complete sympathy" with the plan. He also communicated that the members of the Council were making difficulty more than he expected, but that "we shall succeed" in accepting the plan. See Godley to Curzon - 26 May 1905; C.C., Vol.2 10.

Godley's opinion though important in itself was conveyed to Hardinge after the annulment of the partition, when Godley congratulated Hardinge on his volte face. But Godley had congratulated Curzon on the acceptance of the scheme too,<sup>1</sup> as Sir Walter Lawrence, once the private Secretary to Curzon, had done,<sup>2</sup> and still advised King George V to undo the partition.<sup>3</sup> We are obliged to reject Godley's testimony, for Brodrick, as soon as he received the Government of India's despatch on partition, informed Curzon that the project was "likely to be acceptable", that in view of Curzon's strong views on the plan, he would back the project so far as it lay in his power, and that it might be accepted by his Council without very much amendment.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, Brodrick's Council proposed certain amendments, though he got the original project accepted. The important point is that Brodrick, though a figure of decisive importance in the partition tangle, was only one of the many interested in the Kitchener-Curzon controversy. The final decision on the partition proposal was taken by the Secretary of State and his Council, but in the Military Administration dispute the Prime Minister and the entire Cabinet were involved. Brodrick, as the constitutional head of Indian affairs, had considerable influence but did not have the final say in the latter issue. As late as August 1904, at a meeting held in London, Balfour, Godley, Brodrick and Curzon discussed the Military Administration question, and Balfour made it clear that he did not want the "army to be paralysed".<sup>5</sup> This demonstrates the close interest that the Prime Minister himself took in the problem. Even the King

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1. Godley to Curzon - 30 May 1905; Ibid. In this letter Godley while congratulating Curzon wrote that "it was a big thing" which Curzon had achieved and that "I have myself from the first believed in your scheme..." Also see Godley to Curzon - 7 June 1905. Ibid.

2. Lawrence to Curzon - 5 June 1905; C.C., Vol.183.

3. Crewe to Hardinge - 11 Aug. 1911; Crewe Papers, U.L.C.

4. Brodrick to Curzon - 3 March 1905. C.C., Vol.164.

5. Brodrick to Curzon - 20 Jan. 1905; C.C., Vol.164.



seemed to have been concerned about it. Kitchener was a great soldier and Curzon was a great Viceroy, but the difference lay in the extent of the involvement of British public opinion in respect of these two personalities. The Home Government could not but be aware of "what the loss of Kitchener would mean".<sup>1</sup> Lord Kitchener was "the idol of the British people" and Brodrick "humoured the feelings of the English people".<sup>2</sup> It is possible, too, that the Home Government, at a time when its own future was quite uncertain, felt unable to risk a decision which would have been most unfavourably received by public opinion in Britain. Thus, whereas the partition was an Indian issue, the Kitchener-Curzon dispute had transcended its purely Indian character, and the decision on the one matter could not be influenced by the other. Besides, Brodrick was weak and vacillating, and would have hardly withstood Curzon's remonstrances and rebuffs had he attempted not to accept the partition proposals.

Meanwhile, Brodrick was being pressed by Members of Parliament to lay before the House papers relating to the partition and also the grounds for the decision.<sup>3</sup> Originally, Brodrick had desired to publish the Government of India's letters of 3 December 1903 and of 2 February 1905 with their enclosures, together with his own despatch of 9 June 1905, and he asked the Government for their views on this.<sup>4</sup> The Government of India were opposed to publication of the correspondence, believing that it would be a calamity. They thought that their letter of 2 February 1905, contained passages<sup>5</sup>

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1. Brodrick to Balfour - 5 Oct. 1904; Balfour Papers, No. 49721, B.M.
  2. The Daily Hitavadi - 9 July 1905; B.N.N.R., No.28.
  3. On 11 July 1905 Roberts asked the Sec. of State to place the papers before the House. J. & P. Dept., File 1995, Vol.725 of 1905. Also see Sec. of State to Gov.-Gen. - 19 July 1905; (Telegram), C.C., Vol.175.
  4. Sec. of State to Gov-Gen. - 15 July 1905; Ibid.
  5. They pointed out that paras. 7,9,22,26 & 27 of the despatch of 2 Feb. 1905 were unsuitable for publication.

which would "provoke renewal of bitter agitation" in Bengal and would prove detrimental to the establishment of the new province, which they were so anxious to accomplish without the least delay. In their opinion, it was sufficient to inform Parliament by the presentation of the resolution on the subject.<sup>1</sup> The resolution, together with their letter of 23 December 1903 to the Government of Bengal was presented to Parliament on 9 August 1905. But the publication of a mere resolution on a subject which had angered the Bengali community and which was the cause of incessant protests to the Home Government was not regarded as enough. The Pioneer Mail pronounced it as "a singularly unsatisfactory document" rather "in the nature of an advocate's address to a jury than of a Government taking a people into confidence".<sup>2</sup>

On 9 August 1905, Herbert Roberts asked the Secretary of State to publish the entire correspondence. He also tabled a motion for the adjournment of the House in view of the information he had received on the course of the agitation in Bengal. In his speech Roberts criticised the measure as "alienating to some extent the affection and weakening the confidence of the people of India in our rule".<sup>3</sup> Roberts, however, withdrew his motion in view of the undertaking given by Brodrick "to communicate with the Government of India, and to lay before Parliament ... whatever papers it was in his power to lay in order to elucidate the whole question".<sup>4</sup>

Accordingly, Brodrick got in touch with Curzon and urged him to agree to the publication of the correspondence. He asked Curzon if he wanted to omit any papers from publication.<sup>5</sup> Since Curzon was opposed to the publication of the correspondence, Brodrick appealed to Balfour for help.<sup>6</sup>

1. Gov-Gen. to Sec. of State - 17 July 1905; (Telegram), C.C., Vol.175.

2. The Pioneer Mail - 18 Aug. 1905.

3. Speech of Roberts - 9 Aug. 1905; 151, H.C.Debs., 4s, cols.878-83.

4. Speech of Brodrick - 9 Aug.1905; Ibid., col.892.

5. Sec. of State to Gov-Gen.- 10 Aug.1905;(Telegram), C.C., Vol.175.

6. Brodrick to Balfour- 23 Aug.1905; Balfour Papers, No.49721, B.M.

It seems that Brodrick wished to present the papers not only because of his pledge to Parliament but because he was contemplating modifying the decision.<sup>1</sup> On 27 September 1905, he wrote to Balfour that "the opposition are considering if they should not take up the case & press for a Govr. & Council like Bombay - Curzon would never listen to this, but Lansdowne thinks we may be forced to make some concession". This he thought was impossible so long as Curzon was there. "Every day", he continued, "makes a difference & it will be the 20th of Nov.<sup>r</sup> before I can get an opinion from anyone else as to whether the agitation is shoddy or one of those curious Indian impulses wh. are really dangerous".<sup>2</sup> To Minto, he regretted the King's decision to let Curzon stay so long.<sup>3</sup> He also told him that the King did "not estimate the grave public inconvenience of his arrangement for Curzon's staying". In addition to other reasons Brodrick cited the growing agitation in Bengal, which necessitated "responsible and independent adviser on the spot ... one who is not committed". He told Minto that he had asked Curzon to postpone the execution of the project for three weeks in order to find out whether the agitation was bogus or not.<sup>4</sup> On the same day he wrote a Cabinet Minute dealing with the circumstances in which the Government of India's proposals had been accepted, and pointed out the desirability of publishing the correspondence, reiterating that, if it was not done, the Opposition would take a "line against the measure". He once again stressed the fact that he could "get no guidance as to the importance of the agitation" and recommended an interval between the publication of the official correspondence and the enforcement of the scheme.<sup>5</sup>

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1. Brodrick to Knollys - 22 Sept. 1905; Middleton Papers, No.50072, B.M.
  2. Brodrick to Balfour -27 Sept.1905; Balfour Papers, No.49721.
  3. Brodrick to Minto -27 Sept.1905; (Telegram), Minto Papers, Box 2.Series 3.229.
  4. Brodrick to Minto - 30 Sept.1905; Ibid., Box 1.Series3,228.
  5. Brodrick's Cabinet Minute - 30 Sept.1905; Cab.I.6.Folio 356, Public Records Office.

Balfour was opposed to publication. He wrote to Brodrick,

"If publication would put Curzon's case in so favourable a light that the opposition would accept his view it might be worthwhile to publish: but if not where is the gain?"

He also told Brodrick that if he had no intention of withdrawing the scheme in the face of criticism, the publication would only "provide fresh material for hostile critics".<sup>1</sup>

Brodrick admitted to Balfour that he had not committed himself to Parliament on the point but had said that he would get in touch with Curzon about the matter. Now his course was to tell the House that Curzon advised against publication and consequently he would "decline to publish anything". But soon he retraced his steps by stating that the withholding of papers would increase the opposition to the plan, and would give an appearance of concealment, whereas if they were published, the way in which they were received would guide the Government if any modification was necessary. Above all Brodrick did not want a "moribund Viceroy" to have the final say on the issue. He therefore jealously contended that it was for the Home Government to decide and not for one who was, in his opinion, "merely a locum tenens...".<sup>2</sup> Balfour consulted Lansdowne and neither of them felt that a case had been made for publication. Balfour had to yield, however, in deference to Brodrick's wishes.<sup>3</sup>

Brodrick's plea that the papers should be published because otherwise the Opposition would take a line against the measure was absurd. He was mistaken if he hoped that the presentation of the papers would make the Opposition favour the scheme. The opposition had long before been started in India as well as in Parliament. Cotton had condemned the

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1. Balfour to Brodrick - 4 Oct. 1905; Balfour Papers, No. 49721, B.M.

2. Brodrick to Balfour - 4 Oct. 1905; Ibid.

3. Balfour to Brodrick - 5 Oct. 1905; Ibid.

scheme while presiding at the twentieth session of the Indian National Congress at Bombay. He had raised a protest at a Conference held in Calcutta on 11 January 1905. Roberts had censured the plan and had indeed on 9 August 1905, tabled a motion for the adjournment of the House. It was on this day that Brodrick had promised to get in touch with Curzon in order to lay whatever further papers he could before Parliament. Between 9 August 1905 and 20 August 1905, when he authorised the Government of India to proceed with the execution of the project, knowing as he did the dates when the Partition Bill was to be introduced, the date of the Proclamation, and the date when the scheme would actually be enforced, Brodrick had ample time to decide whether he would allow the Government of India to proceed with the plan or whether he would postpone action till he had carried out his pledge to Parliament. He even accepted the unsatisfactory arrangements for housing the new Government at Dacca when some of the members of his Council had actually planned to suspend the project. When it was pointed out to him that the Bill and the Proclamations should be thoroughly examined by the respective departments of the India Office, he did not allow this to delay its progress and managed to get the royal assent within four days of the approval of his Council.

Brodrick's second argument that he would be better able to <sup>assess</sup> gauge the significance of the agitation if the papers were published was equally invalid. The agitation had been renewed with great fervour; on 7 August 1905, the boycott of British goods had been resorted to and telegrams had been showered upon him against the plan. Even if sufficient allowance is made for the fact that Curzon minimised the importance of the agitation in his communications with Brodrick, the latter had means to ascertain whether what the Bengalis and the Opposition members in Parliament were saying was true or not. And indeed Brodrick did not sit idle on that account. On 3 August 1905, he wrote to Ampthill:

"I fear the trouble about the partition of Bengal will be very great indeed, and, although the Viceroy may by his personality push it through, the opponents of the scheme will spare nothing to make him go back upon it. Even the Press here are at last beginning to get a little frightened about it...". 1

He wrote this before the boycott resolution had been passed and before the adjournment in the House. On 11 August 1905, (four days after the boycott resolution and two days after the adjournment motion) he again wrote to Ampthill :

"His [Curzon's] unpopularity in Bengal which would have been almost certain in the case of any Viceroy, but of which he has secured to himself a special measure by his recent plain speaking, makes it very doubtful whether it would be advantageous for him to receive the Prince of Wales. We have reason to think that this is one of the causes of his anxiety to resign now...". 2

Though Brodrick wrongly attributed Curzon's desire to resign to his unpopularity in Bengal, it was true that partition was one of the causes of his unpopularity and Brodrick knew it to be so. Even Curzon made no secret of it, and about three months before Brodrick put his seal on the proposals, Curzon had written to him:

"... the enactment of this most necessary and salutary measure will make me, during the remainder of my time, the most unpopular Viceroy against whom the Bengali wire-pullers and agitators have ever poured forth their illimitable resources of invective, vilification and scorn". 3

Curzon repeated this point and wrote again in the same tone:

"No member of Government, and perhaps least of myself, can be anxious for a renewal of Bengali agitation with its trail of pestilent falsehood. ... It will expose me personally to a tornado of invective that will not cease until after I have left India". 4

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1. Brodrick to Ampthill - 3 Aug. 1905. Ampthill Collection, Vol.12.
  2. Brodrick to Ampthill - 11 Aug. 1905; Ibid.
  3. Curzon to Brodrick - 23 March 1905. C.C., Vol.164.
  4. Curzon to Brodrick - 15 June 1905; Ibid.

Moreover, Brodrick expressed his apprehensions about the unpopularity of the scheme in his despatch of 9 June 1905. He was thus well aware of the opposition.

After according sanction to the project, he did not rest there and enquired of Ampthill about the agitation.<sup>1</sup> It is true that Ampthill did not attach much importance to it and thought that it would not be sustained for long. "The Bengali", he wrote to Brodrick, "has neither the courage nor the stamina to do so".<sup>2</sup> But Brodrick told Ampthill that his was "the only reassuring" opinion that he had so far received.<sup>3</sup> In other words, the other opinions which Brodrick had received had not been reassuring. On 26 September 1905, just less than three weeks before the partition was to be enforced, Brodrick asked Ampthill if there could be any alternative plan to that put forward by the Government of India and wrote, "You don't say that you think Curzon's scheme the only possible one".<sup>4</sup>

It was too late for Brodrick to pose the question. He also informed Curzon that he would present the papers to Parliament on 10 October 1905, and asked him to allow three weeks of interval between this date and the consummation of the partition. In this telegram, Brodrick gave only one reason for the postponement - to avoid the "appearance of haste",<sup>5</sup> but his other real intentions he had already disclosed in his letters to Knollys, Minto and Balfour wherein he cited Lansdowne as suggesting modifications in the plan at that late hour.

However, the Government of India did not fail to perceive the effect of Brodrick's request for postponement and did not take the telegram at its face value. They thought that if the project was postponed for the period suggested, the

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1. Brodrick to Ampthill - 7 Sept. 1905; Ampthill Collection, Vol.12.
  2. Ampthill to Brodrick - 25 Sept. 1905; Ibid., Vol.7/3.
  3. Brodrick to Ampthill - 4 Oct. 1905. Ibid., Vol.12.
  4. Brodrick to Ampthill - 26 Sept. 1905; Ibid., Vol.12.
  5. Sec. of State to Gov-Gen. - 7 Oct. 1905; C.C., Vol.175.

agitators "would endeavour to get the entire scheme suspended" until such time as a Royal Commission was appointed to enquire into the whole issue. There were other practical difficulties too. Postponement would have involved the withdrawal of the Proclamation, the cancellation of Fuller's appointment, and the revision of the necessary arrangements which they had already made with the full consent of Brodrick. An amending Act, would also have been required to legislate the postponement. "The Government", observed Risley, "would be an object of derision throughout India".<sup>1</sup> Accordingly, the Government of India, while agreeing to the publication of the papers,<sup>2</sup> protested against the suggested postponement.<sup>3</sup> Curzon accused Brodrick of delaying tactics and remarked that Brodrick was largely responsible for the persistence of the agitation and the acceptance of his "latest suggestion could only have given a fresh lease of life with the gravest injury to the public interest".<sup>4</sup> Brodrick once again yielded and accepted the Government of India's recommendations.<sup>5</sup> The new province of East Bengal and Assam came into existence with effect from 16 October 1905.

Brodrick's handling of the partition question was far

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1. Risley's Note - 8 Oct. 1905; Simla Record-I. Home Dept., Public - A Procs., C.C., Vol.247, Proc. 302, p.14.
  2. Certain papers were omitted from publication. Two reasons were assigned: firstly, that a letter from an individual could not be edited without his consent, which would have involved delay and secondly it was not thought desirable to publish the "very hostile" minute of Buckland which could be omitted "only by omitting all", see joint Note by Sec. Home Dept., (India) & Curzon - 24 Aug. 1905; Ibid.
  3. Gov-Gen. to Sec. of State - 9 Oct. 1905; (Telegram), C.C., Vol.175.
  4. Curzon's Note - 10 Oct. 1905; Simla Record-I. Home Dept. Public-A Procs., C.C., Vol.247.
  5. Sec. of State to Gov-Gen. - 11 Oct. 1905; (Telegram), C.C., Vol.175.



from satisfactory. In his Records & Reactions, Brodrick denies any feeling of "jealousy or competition" between himself and Curzon, maintaining that the "political paths" of the two were wholly different.<sup>1</sup> However, the later actions of Brodrick belie this assertion and reveal a sense of frustration and grievance which made him adopt under-hand means in attempting to drive Curzon to ignominy, though Curzon was partly responsible for his own troubles. Curzon once complained to Ampthill:

"I work under him [Brodrick] with no pleasure whatever, for he seems to me to derive a peculiar satisfaction from disagreeing with me on the majority of points to which rightly or wrongly I attach importance...".<sup>2</sup>

This comment highly exaggerates Brodrick's unco-operative attitude. In it Curzon gives his side of the story only, and Brodrick was right in stating that Curzon had never learnt to take "no for an answer" and "that if he had obtained 80 per cent of that for which he asked, he still pressed vehemently for [t]he remaining 20".<sup>3</sup> But, as Secretary of State, it was Brodrick's responsibility to judge for himself what to give to Curzon and what to withhold from him, and having consented to a measure, it was his bounden duty to support the Government of India when his support was necessary in the interests of good administration.

However, Brodrick had adopted a different course. On 9 August 1905, while speaking on the adjournment motion put forward by Roberts, Brodrick failed to defend the partition convincingly in the House. He admitted that "the disruption of social and linguistic ties by the division was a considerable one..." but immediately followed this by asserting that "those who looked at it coolly here had reason to doubt whether the representations that this disruption of ties involved also an

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1. Middleton, Records & Reactions, p.187.

2. Curzon to Ampthill - 31 Oct. 1904; Ampthill Collection, Vol. 37/1.

3. Brodrick to Ampthill - 24 June 1904; Ibid.

effect on the intellectual and material progress of the population to be transferred, could be sustained".<sup>1</sup> He presented the Government of India's case in a manner that suggested his own reservations and offered a defence which was more in the nature of a confession from an accused rather than a convincing argument from his counsel. His reason for the "acceptance of the scheme on the ground that it was necessary to take action, and that, after prolonged consideration, the Government of India has taken the line of least resistance with a view to greater efficiency"<sup>2</sup> betrayed Brodrick's essential lack of sympathy and his half-hearted support for the partition, for which he was as much responsible as the Government of India. It was a weak defence and the Bengalee did not fail to note that Brodrick's speech was "halting and deprecatory and conveyed the impression that he is neither responsible for the partition scheme nor enamoured of it".<sup>3</sup>

This impression Brodrick continued to create and in view of his attitude towards the question of honouring Curzon, it seems that it was intentional. He referred to the partition in his telegram of 16 August 1905 when there was hardly any reason to mention it, and made the telegram public. The effect it had on the course of agitation was described by Ampthill in the following words:--

"At the present moment, however, every advantage is being taken of a sentence in one of your published telegrams which is taken to imply that you disapproved of Partition yourself and only sanctioned the scheme out of deference to Lord Curzon's personal wishes. This is unfortunate as it may lead to renewed clamour as soon as Lord Curzon has gone...".<sup>4</sup>

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1. Speech of Brodrick - 9 Aug. 1905; 151, H.C. Debs., 4s, cols. 888-9.
  2. Ibid.
  3. The Bengalee - 11 Aug. 1905.
  4. Ampthill to Brodrick - 29 Aug. 1905; Ampthill Collection, Vol.7/3. Lovat Fraser writes "that one telegram did more to prolong riot and disorder in Bengal than a hundred incitements from the Bengali leaders". Fraser L., op.cit., p.388.

Likewise when the papers dealing with the partition were published, they failed to convince those who were opposed to it. The Bengalee of 2 December 1905, commented:

"The impression left on the public mind from a perusal of the papers is that if the Kitchener controversy had not blocked the way, and if Mr. Brodrick had not felt compelled to veto the Viceroy's proposals in that connection, the partition proposals of the Government of India would not have been accepted by him". 1

Brodrick through his tactless and lukewarm approach put good cards in the hands of the agitators, which they used to the great disadvantage of the Government of India. Either he ought to have rejected the scheme or, having accepted it, he ought not to have adopted the course he did,

It is a strange phenomenon of history that statesmen and administrators, fearing the verdict of the future, often disavow their own actions. Brodrick in a debate in the House of Lords held on 30 June 1908 reported that his telegram of 16 August 1905, was published at Curzon's own request.<sup>2</sup> Either his memory had failed him or, <sup>his statement</sup> ~~it~~ was a travesty of truth. It was he who had approached Curzon to include the telegram in the published correspondence, and Curzon accepted it. But more disparaging than Brodrick's denial of his action was Curzon's disavowal of the partition scheme when, in the House of Lords on the same day, he disclaimed any credit for the partition and said that the form which the proposals ultimately took was very different from the proposal he had put forward initially and which underwent a change when Ampthill was the head of the Indian administration. "When I returned to India", explained Curzon, "I found that he [Ampthill] had courteously reserved the matter for my decision, and, knowing the sincerity and the thoroughness with which the matter had been discussed by his

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1. The Bengalee - 2 Dec. 1905.

2. Speech of Brodrick - 30 June 1908, 191, H.L.Debs., 4s, cols. 542-3.

Government, I readily acquiesced in his views".<sup>1</sup> It is true that Amthill had reserved the matter for Curzon's decision, but even before Curzon left for England he had directed Fraser to add a few more districts to what had been originally proposed. Moreover, he had left definite instructions with Risley as to the manner in which the scheme should be carried out.<sup>2</sup> On his return, Curzon examined the draft and pronounced that the plan had proceeded in the right direction.<sup>3</sup> It was he who actually polished the despatch and advised Risley to add certain arguments merely to get the approval of the Secretary of State.<sup>4</sup> Again it was under Curzon's aegis that the Viceroy's Council approved of the plan. Curzon had the initial as well as the final responsibility for the scheme.

But in 1912, after the partition had been modified, Curzon sent a letter to Amthill in which he assumed "full and final responsibility" for the scheme. Amthill reminded Curzon of the latter's earlier stand when Curzon had disclaimed the "credit" for the partition and wrote:

"It seems to me that if you had full as well as final responsibility you were also entitled to full credit, and that no share either of responsibility or of credit could belong to me. I did not accept credit in 1908 and I do not accept it now; I disclaimed responsibility at the same time and I shall disclaim it now".<sup>5</sup>

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1. Speech of Curzon - 30 June 1908; Ibid., cols. 510-11. Before the debate Curzon told Morley that he was going to defend partition in the House of Lords, "maintaining that Amthill did the mischief". See Hirtzel's Diary - 20 June 1908, India Home Misc. No. 864-4. When Hirtzel, Morley's private Secretary told Amthill that Curzon intended to disclaim the partition, Amthill told Hirtzel "that everything done while C. was in England had been automatically sent to him for approval". Hirtzel's Diary - 25 June 1908; Ibid. Also see Hirtzel's account of 20 July 1908, in which he wrote that Curzon came with the documents on partition claiming that he was "right & Amthill wrong". Ibid.
  2. See above, pp. 118 & 132.
  3. See above, p. 133.
  4. See above, pp. 133-4.
  5. Amthill to Curzon - 24 Feb. 1912; C.C., Vol. 434.

Such being the stands of the high personages involved in the issue, the historian is at a loss to find the causes of their somersaults, which often remain hidden, or can only be explained <sup>in terms of</sup> ~~as to~~ the personal attitudes and squabbles of individuals involved in the changing tides of high politics. In the circumstances, it is not without a note of caution that the final verdict is to be awarded.

Nevertheless, historians have pronounced the partition as a blunder, and have argued that the best way to relieve Bengal was to separate Bihar, and that this would have been far less objectionable to the Bengalis.<sup>1</sup>

The move for the separation of Bihar was not new. It dated back to the birth of the Bihar Times in 1893. The demand for a separate province of Bihar, like that which was made in Orissa for some time, came as a result of the resentment which the Biharis felt at being dominated by the Bengalis. The idea was floated and later given expression through the Bihar Times and in 1896 an address on the matter was presented by the District Board of Gaya to Mackenzie, the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal. Mackenzie dismissed it as a "mere balloon without any substance".<sup>2</sup> A sort of agitation was also started but "the entire battery of the Bengali press was ... directed against the agitation; they at once saw that it was an ideally perfect scheme that was being proposed, and they therefore, tried to kill the agitation with all the contempt, vilification and mis-representation that they could command".<sup>3</sup> The move was opposed by the Bengalis from ulterior motives, as Bihar was to

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1. McLane, op.cit., pp.359 & 434.

2. The Partition of Bengal or the Separation of Bihar, Tract 1037, p.4. Also see Sinha, A., Mr. O'Donnell's False Step (pamphlet), Bankipore, 1906. J. & P. Dept., File 411 of Vol.794 of 1907. pp.6-7. (Sinha wrote the pamphlet against O'Donnell's advocacy of the separation of Bihar. The author regarded the move as a "positive injury to Bihar as well as Bengal".

3. The Partition of Bengal or the Separation of Bihar, op.cit.

them "the el Dorado of countless Bengali clerks, the asylum of ... Bengali sub-ordinate Judges and Munsifs", and a source of material advancement.<sup>1</sup>

Bihar was an open field for Bengali enterprise. They had virtually a monopoly of posts in Government services and occupied other important positions. In an address presented by the people of Bihar to the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal in 1908, the Biharis complained that though they formed a majority in Western Bengal, they were lamentably under-represented in the Government services, and held the following posts compared with the rest:-<sup>2</sup>

	Total number of posts.	Posts held by Biharis	Salary rang- ing between
Executive Branch of Provin- cial Civil Service.....	375	39	Rs.200-800
Munsifs.....	318	23	200-400
Sub-ordinate Civil Service.	233	18	100-250
Provincial Educational Service.....	127	5	200-700
Judicial Branch of the Prov- incial Service (Sub-ordinate Judges).....	61	1	600-1000
(Provincial Police Service (Deputy Superintendents of Police).....	20	3	250-500
Inspectors of Police.....	65	12	200-250
	<hr/> 1,199	<hr/> 101	

For years the Bengalis had been supreme in Bihar and Orissa and claimed to be "the leaders of every progressive movement".<sup>3</sup>

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1. The Pioneer as cited <sup>in ibid.</sup> ~~above~~, p.7.
  2. Sec. Govt. of India to Godley, Under Sec. of State - 1 Oct. 1908. No.67 of 1908. Appendix to the address presented by the people of Bihar to the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal on 14 Aug. 1908. P.L. 1908. Vol.36, L.No.67.
  3. Ghosh, A.K., Partition of Bengal - A great Boon (Pamphlet) J. & P. Dept., File 2420, Vol.769 of 1906. p.12.

The separation of Bihar would have been injurious to their material interests as they would then have been confined to the Bengali-speaking area of the province. This would explain the fact that throughout the period in which the scheme of partition was discussed, the Bengalis never suggested the alternative of taking away Bihar.

The only suggestion to this effect came from Sir Henry Cotton, who in his presidential address at the 1904 session of the Indian National Congress held at Bombay, admitted the desirability of curtailing the boundaries of Bengal. Cotton suggested that either an Executive Council should be created or Bihar should be separated and constituted as a Chief Commissioner's province.<sup>1</sup> Earlier, Cotton had put forward the suggestion in the Subjects Committee Meeting of the Congress, and it had been duly seconded by S. Sinha<sup>2</sup> and supported by Ganga Prashad Varma, delegates to the Congress. The suggestion did not find favour with the Bengalis and was "laughed down" by the delegates from Bengal,<sup>3</sup> who, instead, resolved to demand that Bengal should have a Governor with an Executive Council. This was finally moved as a resolution from the Congress platform and passed.<sup>4</sup> Shortly after the Congress Session, Sir Henry Cotton presided at a Conference held on 11 January 1905, in the Calcutta Town Hall, and again referred to the desirability of placing Bihar and Chota Nagpur under a separate administration, but this was not incorporated in the resolutions passed at the Conference, which again asked for Bengal to be raised to the status of a Governor's province.<sup>5</sup>

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1. Cotton's Presidential Address, Report of the I.N.C., 1904, p.45.
  2. In tract 1037, op.cit., Sinha is referred to as a delegate from Bihar. His name does not, however, appear in the list of the delegates to the Congress. He is mentioned as being from Allahabad and also moved a resolution at the said session of the Congress.
  3. Partition of Bengal or the Separation of Bihar, op.cit., p.9.
  4. Report of the I.N.C., 1904. Resolution XIV.
  5. Tract No.1037. op.cit., p.9. Also see the Case against the Break-up of Bengal, Tract 1037, pp.17 & 44.

McLane in his thesis asserts that "while the issue was unsettled, alternative plans were put forward by the nationalists", that the non-Bengali areas of the province such as Orissa, Chota-Nagpur and Bihar might be separated.<sup>1</sup> As for Bihar, Sir Henry Cotton was the only such "nationalist" who put forward the plan. But Sir Henry was not a Bengali and his plan was opposed by the Bengali nationalists as we have shown. His voice failed to produce an echo.

The leading newspapers of Bengal also opposed the separation of Bihar.<sup>2</sup> They fought against the suggestions of the Bihar Times which had advocated the organization of a movement to press for this.<sup>3</sup> Even as early as 1903, the Bengalee, hoping that Orissa might be converted into a Chief Commissioner's province as a result of the suggested addition of Oriya tracts from Madras, advocated that it should be retained as a part of Bengal.<sup>4</sup> The Bengali papers contested the idea of partition and said that what Bengal needed was the re-

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1. McLane, op.cit., pp.356-7. The suggestion for the separation of Orissa and Chota Nagpur was put by the Sec. of the Bengal National Chamber of Commerce as well as by the inhabitants of Dacca in their memorials. The Central Muhammadan Association also put forward the idea of separating Orissa but at the same time asked for the formation of a province with a Lieutenant-Governor in case Bengal was to be partitioned. (See above, p.41), McLane has also related the story as given by Tract No.1037 and the adoption of a different resolution by the Congress than what had been proposed by Cotton. He also admits that "There seem not to have been any petitions or memorials from Bengalis previous to the summer of 1905 which recommended the creation of a non-Bengali province including Bihar" and is still of the view that the separation of Bihar would have been less objectionable to the Bengalis. He fails to support his contention by any evidence nor has he examined the Bengali opposition to the idea of separating Bihar except for what has been given by the writers of the Tract 1037, op.cit.
  2. <sup>Th</sup>Bengalee - 10, 12 and 24 Jan. 1904. Also see, the Bengalee of 2 April 1904. Also see the Indian Mirror of 29 Jan. 1904; B.N.N.R., No. 6.
  3. The Bihar Times - 15 & 29 Jan. & 19 Feb. & 26 March 1904; Ibid., Nos.4,6,9 & 14 respectively. Also see the Bihar News - 23 & 30 Jan.1904; Ibid., Nos.5 & 6 respectively. Also see Bihar News of 15 March 1905; Ibid., No.12 of 1905.
  4. See above, p.91.



annexation of Assam to the province.<sup>1</sup> The Bengalee of 20 February 1904, had opposed the amputation of Bihar, Chota Nagpur and Orissa<sup>2</sup> and the Hitavarta of 30 April 1904, stated that the people of Bengal were decidedly averse to the separation of Bihar.<sup>3</sup> The Biharee, therefore, in later years, attributed the failure of the Bengalis to get the partition modified to "their selfish attitude in strenuously resisting the separation of Bihar".<sup>4</sup>

This attitude did not change. When on 9 August 1905, Herbert Roberts moved an adjournment motion on partition, he criticised the actions of the Government of India but admitted that Bengal was a heavy charge and that some sort of partition was necessary.<sup>5</sup> The Bengalee of 30 August 1905, took exception to Roberts' admission that there was a case for reducing the territories of Bengal.<sup>6</sup> When O'Donnell wrote in his pamphlet that the separation of Bihar was desired by the people of Bengal as well as Bihar, the Amrita Bazar Patrika challenged his contention.<sup>7</sup> O'Donnell also wrote a letter to Surendranath Banerjea to the effect. The Amrita Bazar Patrika, however, asserted that no one in Bengal would agree to O'Donnell's suggestion.<sup>8</sup>

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1. See above, p. 40.

2. The Bengalee - 20 Feb. 1904.

3. The Hitavarta - 30 April 1904. B.N.N.R., No. 18. Also see the Daily Hitavadi - 23 April 1905; Ibid., No. 17.

4. The Biharee - 13 July 1906; B.N.N.R., No. 31.

5. Speech of Herbert Roberts - 9 Aug. 1905; 151, H.C. Debs., 4s, cols. 880-1.

6. The Bengalee - 30 Aug. 1905. The Amrita Bazar Patrika wrote that the case for the reversal of the partition had been mismanaged in Parliament inasmuch as the principle of partition had been accepted by putting forward alternative proposals. The best thing, according to the paper was to prove that the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal was not over-worked and even if it was so, the administrative burdens should be curtailed through a scheme of decentralisation as had been recommended by Brodrick. See the Amrita Bazar Patrika - 12 Oct. 1906; B.N.N.R., No. 42.

7. The Amrita Bazar Patrika - 27 Nov. 1906.

8. Ibid., - 25 Dec. 1906. Also see O'Donnell's interview as published in the Westminster Gazette of 14 July 1905; C.C., Vol. 247.

The idea that Bihar should be separated, as eventually put forward by the Bengalis by implication, was only an "after-thought"<sup>1</sup> after the scheme had been accepted by the Secretary of State. As late as July 1905, even when the partition plan had been accepted, the Bengalis did not incorporate the suggestion that Bihar should be separated in the memorial submitted by the people of Eastern Bengal and said to have been signed by thousands of people. Instead they asked for a Governor's province and failing that, the transfer of Orissa and Chota Nagpur to the Central Provinces.<sup>2</sup> If the grievance of the Bengalis against the amputation of their national identity was genuine, and independent of serious material considerations, the logical course for them was to put forward the plea that Bihar, a non-Bengali-speaking area should be separated. But underneath their political clamour also lay the deep-rooted fear of the loss of power, position and material benefits which they would have sustained as a result of the separation of either Eastern Bengal or of Bihar.

The Bengalis ultimately changed their stand and brought forward a resolution on 7 August 1905, - the day of the passing of the boycott resolution - asking for the re-consideration or withdrawal of the orders, "or if partition be unavoidable", (which they refused to admit), "modify the orders, so that the Bengalee-speaking race may form part and parcel of the same Administration by incorporating the Presidency and the Burdwan Divisions into the newly formed Provinces".<sup>3</sup> In other words, the Bengalis would have been prepared unwillingly to accept the partition at this late date if for the loss of

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1. Curzon's reply to O'Donnell's interview. Curzon wrote the reply but probably did not send it for publication. Ibid.
  2. Memorial from the people of East Bengal to Sec. of State - Aug. 1905; J. & P. Dept., File 2341, Vol.728 of 1905.
  3. The Bengalee - 8 Aug. 1905. Also see Telegrams from Basu, Sircar, Mazumdar, Chaudhuri to Sec. of State - 15 Aug. 1905; J. & P. Dept., File 2503, Vol.729 of 1905. R.C.Dutt made a similar suggestion to Morley. See R.C.Dutt to Morley - 22 & 24 Feb. 1908; Morley Papers, Vol.43, Bundle G.

Orissa, Chota Nagpur and Bihar, they could have obtained Assam - a tract whose incorporation with Bengal they had previously opposed as a retrogressive move which would harm their chaste language, and their social, religious and political ties. In their final petition submitted to Lord Hardinge in June 1911, they had second thoughts about what they had said earlier. They asked that the Burdwan, Presidency, Rajshahi, Dacca, Chittagong, Patna and Bhagalpur Divisions including Santhal Parganas, Hazaribagh and Manbhum districts of Chota Nagpur be placed under a Governor and Chota Nagpur and Orissa be placed either under a Commissioner or amalgamated with the Central Provinces. But if the Government were not disposed to accept the suggestion, they pleaded that the five Bengali-speaking Divisions, Manbhum and Hazaribagh districts, Assam and the Feudatory States of Cooch Behar, Sikkim and Hill Tipperah be formed into a Lieutenant-Governor's province and that the three divisions of Bihar together with Palamau, Ranchi and Singhbhum districts of Chota Nagpur, Orissa and the Sambalpur district including the Feudatory States of Chota Nagpur and Orissa be constituted as a separate province. As pointed out earlier, the demand for Assam was for no other reasons than material gains. This comes out best especially through their demand for the district of Hazaribagh where the Bengali-speaking population was less than one per cent. Little did it matter if Hazaribagh did not contain a considerable number of Bengalis; it had no less than forty-two mica mines. Similarly Manbhum contained rich coal-fields. If language was the test for the reconstruction of the provinces, as proposed by the Bengalis, they forgot that, according to their own criterion, they were neither entitled to Assam nor to some other parts which they demanded. As a matter of fact they had no claim on Calcutta, as it contained less than fifty per cent of Bengali-speaking population.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Memorial from the inhabitants of East & West Bengal to Hardinge (n.d.). The King's Durbar Announcement Volume, Crewe Papers, U.L.C.

2. Census of India, 1911, Bengal, Part I, pp.405, 528.

Thus we see that when the suggestion for the separation of Bihar did come, it was conditional, and given as a result of desperation and that too most grudgingly, and not without severe criticism from Bengali newspapers. In the circumstances it is highly doubtful if the Bengalis would have accepted the separation of Bihar had it been proposed in 1903, and it is almost certain that they would have debated, protested and agitated against it.

To attribute the agitation in Bengal and the general unrest in India <sup>s. l. l. n.</sup> ~~solely~~ to the partition of Bengal is a very narrow view of history. It is to focus<sup>s</sup> all the attention to the spark which kindled the fire without taking into account that the fuel is probably more important than the spark. For as long as the fuel accumulates, the situation is always explosive.

## Chapter V

### Agitation Against Partition

Even before the issuing of the Partition Resolution of 19 July 1905, the agitation against Partition which the sympathetic Bayley had foreseen, the Bengalee had called for, and Curzon by his manoeuvres had sought to minimise, had broken out in full force. The agitation was to be long sustained and was to call forth new techniques of opposition to Government in the Boycott and Swadeshi movements. It occasioned a concealed policy clash between Bengali Congressmen and Congress leaders from other provinces, and an open rift between Moderates and Extremists. It served to rouse the Muslims of Eastern India, hitherto apathetic, to participate in organised politics. It was used as a weapon in British politics, and how to handle an agitation turning into terrorism became a major issue between Minto and Morley. Finally rival estimates of the real nature and importance of the agitation became the basis of arguments for and against a reversal of Partition.

In 1905 anti-British agitation was no new thing in India. There had been agitation in 1878 when the Vernacular Press Act and the Arms Act were passed, in 1882 over the Ilbert Bill, in 1891 over the Age of Consent Bill, and in 1896 over the Cotton Duties and Indian Tariff Bills. But the factors responsible for discontent and resentment against the British in India had been steadily gaining strength. The political grievances of educated Indians who aspired to a share in the administration, constantly voiced by the Indian National Congress, had long also remained unfulfilled. Curzon admitted that there was "growing up a sort of national feeling". The timid approach to partnership displayed in the establishment of the Statutory Civil Service, in Ripon's local government reforms, or in the Indian Councils Acts of 1892 had not satisfied that national feeling. Curzon's attempt to convince "the mass of the people that our rule is juster, purer and

more beneficent than either any other rule could be, or than would be the rule of their own men", and to convince the politically ambitious minority that they "were as yet profoundly unfitted" for office, that there was no Indian in the whole sub-continent fit enough to become a member of the Viceroy's Executive Council,<sup>1</sup> merely inflamed national feeling. To note, but then ignore change, as Curzon did; or to deny change as Ampthill did with his pronouncement that "the people of India cannot govern themselves, never have governed themselves, do not wish to govern themselves"<sup>2</sup> was no longer practical politics. Minto showed a much sounder judgement when he wrote to Morley in 1907

"... we cannot continue to govern India with any hope of tranquillity till we give her educated classes a chance of greater share in the government of the country".<sup>3</sup>

Moreover Indian agitation was no longer solely political. The expansion of Indian trade and industry had fostered the growth of new Indian business interests with their own economic grievances. They resented the dominance of British Agency Houses and rejected the Liberal doctrine of Free Trade. The revenue and fiscal policies of the government, the increasing military expenditure, the imposition of cotton duties were denounced. The industrial backwardness of India became an important issue with the critics and the government was constantly attacked for draining the wealth of the country and pandering to the interests of the Lancashire manufacturers.<sup>4</sup>

This middle class discontent, political and economic, had been given greater strength and scope by being linked with

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1. Curzon to Balfour - 31 March 1901; C.C., Vol.181.
  2. Ampthill's Address to the Junior Constitutional Club, Piccadilly on British Administration in India - 21 Nov.1906; Ampthill Collection, Vol.58.
  3. Minto to Morley - 8 May 1907; Morley Papers, Vol.5.
  4. For details see Ghosh, op.cit., Chapter II. Both Curzon and Minto deprecated the imposition of cotton duties. See Curzon to Brodrick - 23 Feb. 1904; C.C., Vol.164, & Minto to Ibbetson - 7 Dec. 1907; Minto Papers, M981.

Hindu religious revivalism by B.G. Tilak, Lajpat Rai, B.C. Pal and Aurobindo Ghose. Pal ascribed the failure of the Congress to become a mass movement to "its pronounced secular character". Its propaganda

"failed to draw masses, first because it was conducted mainly in a foreign tongue; next because its ideas and ideals had no reference to the thoughts and traditions of the people, ... and, lastly, and chiefly, because it had no religious reference or inspiration in it". 1

When Tilak placed his propaganda under the patronage of the god Ganesh, and Surendra Nath Banerjea invoked the assistance of the goddess Kali in support of Swadeshi and the boycott, religious appeal gave a new driving force to anti-British agitation. Then in 1905 to internal factors was joined the exhilaration that came from the historic victory of Japan over Russia. In the words of Minto, it brought a

"marked change in the native opinion as to the possible outcome of any struggle between Asiatics and Europeans". 2

Under Curzon, moreover, the Bengalis had their own particular grievances. The Calcutta Municipal Act passed in 1900, the Official Secrets Amendment Bill introduced in 1904 and the educational reforms had enraged them.<sup>3</sup> The Bengalis protested against the measures and even asked for Curzon's recall.<sup>4</sup> But Curzon, believing that they wanted to get rid of him "because I am laying firm the foundations of British rule in this country, and am depriving them of the grievances upon which they have hitherto subsisted",<sup>5</sup> ignored the protests. Instead, he went<sup>on</sup> to provide them with another grievance by his speech of 11 February 1905, at the Calcutta University

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1. Pal, B.C., The Spirit of Indian Nationalism, pp.12-21.

2. Enclosure in Minto to Morley - 9 May 1906; Morley Papers, Vol.2. Also see Amphill to Godley - 31 May 1904; Amphill Collection, Vol.34/1.

3. For details see McLane, op.cit., pp.136-54 & 345-51.

4. Curzon to Hamilton - 22 July 1903; Hamilton Collection, Vol.14.

5. Curzon to Hamilton - 5 Aug. 1903; Ibid.

Convocation wherein he compared western and eastern ideals of truth, much to India's disadvantage, and cast aspersions on Hindu sacred books.<sup>1</sup> With all these grievances still fresh in the minds of the Bengalis, came the partition. The fuel was there, partition kindled it. When Curzon described the partition as "merely the peg selected by the agitators,... on which to hang their action"<sup>2</sup> there was thus much truth in the statement.

The Bengalis were naturally sore for partition threatened many vested interests. Calcutta enjoyed an unrivalled position as the centre of commercial and political activity. It was the headquarters of the moneyed and business class, with interests in the jute and rice producing districts of the new province. With the exception of a few European firms, the jute and rice trade was almost in the hands of Hindu merchants of East Bengal. These business men had much capital invested in Calcutta and were afraid that in years to come the trade would shift to Chittagong which, being nearer to the jute producing areas, would be the cheaper port. Sita Nath Roy, Secretary of the Bengal National Chamber of Commerce and one of the principal agitators had already pointed out the material disadvantages to his class of such a switch of exports and imports from Calcutta. His memorial declared that the development of Chittagong port and

"the enforced annexation of the jute-growing districts to it will be the ringing of the death-knell of Calcutta port, it will be dealing a death-blow particularly to the numerous mills, presses and the carrying companies, here, for the time is not far distant when mills and presses will be set up on the banks of the Karnafuli River....

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1. Ampthill to Curzon - 15 April 1905; C.C., Vol.210. Curzon while referring to his speech wrote to Lamington, the Governor of Bombay, "Calcutta might not unreasonably howl. For it might be said that it was Bengali character that I was exposing". See Curzon to Lamington - 6 April 1905; Ibid. Also see I.H.P.P., 1905; Vol.7047, Proc. 94.
  2. Curzon to Balfour - 11 Dec. 1908; Balfour Papers, 49733.



This change may or may not affect English commerce in India, but it will prove the ruin of those who have a large invested capital in Calcutta". 1

The same fears were expressed by the West Bengal newspapers.

The Hindoo Patriot wrote:

"East Bengal contributes mainly to the sum total of Bengal's prosperity and advancement, and its severance ... would mean positive disaster to the West". 2

Zamindars who held property on both sides of the river Brahmaputra, often absentee landlords with large establishments at Calcutta, likewise found their material interests threatened. In 1897 the British Indian Association, with Prodyat Kumar Tagore as its secretary, had drawn the attention of the government to the disadvantages they would suffer if Bengal were divided.<sup>3</sup> Now they renewed their opposition to partition.<sup>4</sup> The Maharaja of Cossimbazar who presided at the Calcutta Town Hall meeting held on 7 August 1905, when the boycott resolution was passed, when asked by Fraser to explain his opposition, stated:

"I have estates in Bogra, Faridpur ... so I shall have to keep an agent at Dacca Headquarters for them, as well as at Calcutta for my estates here".<sup>5</sup>

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1. Sita Nath Roy, Hon. Sec. Bengal National Chamber of Commerce to Govt. of Bengal - 3 Feb. 1904; P.L., 1905, Vol. 33, Encl. 4 to Encl. 5, paras.63-70. Nalin Bihari Sircar another leader of the agitation based his opposition on similar grounds. See Fraser to Curzon - 8 Oct. 1905; C.C., Vol.211.
  2. The Hindoo Patriot - 12 Feb. 1904; Also see the Amrita Bazar Patrika - 26 Aug. 1905 & the Bengalee of 14 Sept.1905.
  3. See above, p.37, fn.2.
  4. Maharaja-Kumar Prodyat Koomar Tagore, Hon. Sec. British Indian Association to Govt. of Bengal - 19 Feb. 1904; P.L., 1905, Encl. 5 of Encl. 5, para.5; Hon.Secs., Bengal Landholders' Association to Govt. of Bengal - 1 March 1904; Ibid., Encl. 6 of Encl. 5. Also see Risley's Note of 7 Feb. 1904; N.R.P.B., op.cit., para.4.
  5. Fraser to Curzon - 10 Aug. 1905; C.C., Vol.211. The Raja of Lalgola also pointed out similar objections. See Fraser to Curzon - 11 Aug. 1905; Ibid.

The lawyers of Calcutta, who were the most ardent organizers of the anti-partition agitation, were also faced with a prospect of loss. Calcutta was the seat of the High Court, and had the largest number of lawyers in Bengal. With the creation of the new province, their flourishing business in East Bengal whose inhabitants were notoriously litigious,<sup>1</sup> would partly be lost to Dacca.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, since the government had refused to bind itself not to establish a new High Court for East Bengal and Assam,<sup>3</sup> there was the prospect that the loss would become total.<sup>4</sup>

Similarly the monopoly which Calcutta enjoyed in the publication of newspapers and in educational institutions was bound to be affected in so far as the needs of the new province were locally provided for.<sup>5</sup>

Coupled with fear of pecuniary disadvantages was a feeling of loss and diminution in the political power and influence which the Calcutta leaders enjoyed in undivided Bengal. With eight and a half million Hindu population transferred to the new province, they were "proportionately crippled". There was also a strong sentimental attachment to the province which caused the Bengalis to agitate.<sup>6</sup>

All the alarm and indignation aroused by the partition found its expression in a great burst of agitation. There were

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1. Risley's Note - 7 Feb. 1904; N.R.P.B., op.cit., para.4.
  2. Minto to Morley - 5 Feb. 1906; Memorandum, Minto Papers, M. 1005.
  3. Govt. of Bengal to Bengal Chamber of Commerce - 11 Aug. 1905; I.H.P.P., 1905, Vol.7048, Proc.20.
  4. The Administration of Bengal under Sir Andrew Fraser, p.7.
  5. The Bengalee - 15 Sept. 1905.
  6. Minto to Morley - 3 Feb, 1906; Memorandum, op.cit., Like Curzon and his officials, Minto justified the partition on administrative and political grounds. Apropos the political advantage, Minto wrote that the "crippling of Bengali political power is in my opinion one of the strongest arguments in favour of partition". Also see Minto to Morley - 13 Dec. 1905; Morley Papers, Vol.1.

crowded public meetings and demonstrations. Leaflets, pamphlets and newspaper editorials stressed Bengali opposition to the plan. Telegrams and memorials came thick and fast and questions were raised both in the Councils in India and in Parliament in England. But despite the scale and intensity of these protestations and prayers, government remained unmoved.

The failure of the traditional methods of protest demonstrated the need to adopt some more effective form of agitation. The Bengali leaders thought that in the Irish weapon of the boycott they had found the instrument they required. At Calcutta Town Hall meeting the resolution was taken to boycott English manufactures, and by an attack upon English commercial interests so to influence English public opinion as to secure a revocation of the partition. Side by side with this purely political movement went the Swadeshi movement, started with the object of promoting indigenous industries and developing India's resources, but designed also to inculcate a spirit of self-reliance and self-help with *Bande-Mataram* as the new slogan.

It was not enough, however, to have found new methods of agitation. If partition was to be repealed, the agitation must be sustained and intensified. Political slogans and grievances might move the educated classes, particularly where their personal interests were involved. But the illiterate peasantry who formed the bulk of the population could hardly be expected unaided to appreciate the disadvantages of partition. Nor was the support for the boycott and Swadeshi movements easy to secure when they had often to pay higher prices for Swadeshi goods.<sup>1</sup> It was necessary therefore to take active

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1. The Bengali newspapers continuously complained that the prices of Swadeshi goods had been raised considerably. See the Bengalee of 15, 21, and 23 Sept. 1905. The rise in prices proved a great obstacle in the success of the boycott and the Bengalee of 5 Oct. 1905, admitted that people of moderate means were compelled to purchase foreign goods. In its issue of 9 Oct. 1905, the paper published a letter from Sachindra Prasad Basu, Sec. Anti-Circular Society,

steps to secure mass support for the agitation. The services of the landlords and their amala (agents) were requisitioned to enforce the boycott, at the cost sometimes of breaches of the peace and Hindu-Muslim riots.<sup>1</sup> Student volunteers too, applied persuasion, picketing and intimidation. The appeal of religious sentiment was also used to further the agitation. Those who failed to observe the boycott might be exposed to social and religious ostracism,<sup>2</sup> while a religious cloak was spread over the movement. The altars of the temple became as important as the public platform or the college assembly. The Hindoo Patriot rightly argued that

"the introduction of a religious element into the movement will serve as a powerful stimulus, securing its perpetuity for nothing catches so easily in this country as religious fervour". 3

So when on 28 September 1905, the Swadeshi vow was administered at the Kalighat the whole apparatus of invocation of the

footnote 1 continued from previous page:

College Square, Calcutta, in which the writer complained that indigenous goods were not commanding a good market as the shopkeepers charged higher prices. The Indian mills were not capable of meeting the demands. (See Gokhale's speech at the 1905 session of the Indian National Congress, Report of the I.N.C., 1905; pp.10-12). Efforts to set up new mills in Bengal had met with failure. (See Banerjea, op.cit., pp.208-9), and very often the foreign goods were passed into the market as Swadeshi items. See the Bengalee - 10 Sept. 1905; the Sanjivani - 2 Aug. 1906; B.N.N.R., No.32. Also see the note of the J. & P. Committee on the question put by Rees in Parliament on 9 July 1906. Revenue and Statistical Dept., File 1792, Vol.558 of 1906. Also see Govt. of Bengal to Govt. of India - 9 Aug. 1907; J. & P Dept., File 231, Vol.792 of 1907, L. No. 3235-P.

1. The riots in Mymensingh were caused by the interference of the zamindars and the volunteers. For details see J. & P. Dept., File, 3081, Vol.821 of 1907.
2. See File 3718, J. & P. Dept., Vol.961 of 1909. Between June 1906 and Dec. 1909, more than five hundred such cases were reported by the EB&A Govt.
3. The Hindoo Patriot - 22 Sept. 1905; B.N.N.R., No.38.

goddess Kali, immersion in the waters of the Ganges, recitation of mantras and citation of shastras was used to multiply the fervour and the number of the devotees. Referring to the ceremony, the Bengalee wrote:

"Round the image of the Goddess in the temple centres the devotion, the deathless faith of millions of Hindus. No vow is more sacred or more binding than a vow taken before the Goddess at Kalighat. No ceremony is more solemn than a ceremony performed at that place, no sacrificial offering has a higher value than the offering made in that temple".

The paper continued:

"The impressive ceremony at Kalighat was the crowning success of the Swadeshi movement. Stamped with the seal of approbation by the ministers of our religion, sanctified by the holiest ceremony in the most sacred temple in Bengal and affirmed by the solemn vows of thousands of our countrymen, the Swadeshi movement will go forth as a sacred cause...." 1

By such methods was popular support for the agitation secured, or the appearance of popular support. For the multitudes who gathered at Kalighat and other centres on the occasion of anti-partition demonstrations did not do so solely in support of the agitation. The meeting held on 28 September at the Kalighat, said to have been attended by about fifty thousand people,<sup>2</sup> took place on the day of the Mahalaya,<sup>3</sup> a religious occasion which always attracted Hindu pilgrims from the remotest corners. Again, by sheer coincidence 16 October, when Bengal was partitioned was Bijoya, the last day of the Durga puja, when large crowds had gathered to bid farewell to Durga.<sup>4</sup> Anti-partition meetings continued to be arranged on days when religious gatherings were due to take place. So

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1. The Bengalee - 3 Oct. 1905. Also see the Bengalee - 27 Aug., 5 & 12 Sept. 1905; the Bangavasi - 2 Sept. 1905; B.N.N.R., No.36; the Daily Hitavadi - 16 Sept. 1905; Ibid., No.38.

2. The Amrita Bazar Patrika - 29 Sept. 1905; Ibid.

3. The Bengalee - 3 Oct. 1905.

4. The Charu Mihir - 12 Sept. 1895; B.N.N.R., No.38.

though in 1906, the partition anniversary was celebrated on 16 October, in 1907 Narendra Nath Sen, Motil Lal Ghose, Surendra Nath Banerjea and other leaders decreed that it should be celebrated one day later, so as to coincide with Bijoya day! Such measures secured for the movement an intense religious tone, of which Nirad Chaudhuri commented:

"It was not the liberal political thought of the organizers of the Indian National Congress, but the Hindu revivalism of the last quarter of the nineteenth century - a movement which previously had been almost wholly confined to the field of religion - which was the driving force behind the anti-partition agitation of 1905 and subsequent years. This movement was bound sooner or later to clash with liberalism, and the clash which occurred at Surat in 1907 was only superficially a quarrel between the Moderates and the Extremists; in essence it was the manifestation of the irreconcilability of liberal nationalism and Hindu nationalism". 2

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1. The Sanjivani - 3 Oct. 1907; B.N.N.R. No.41; the Daily Hitavadi - 8 Oct. 1907; Ibid., the Hitavadi - 11 Oct. 1907; Ibid., No.42, the Howrah Hitaishi - 12 Oct. 1905. Ibid. No.43. Also see the Bengalee of 13 Oct. ;907. Usually the puja days coincided with anti-partition celebrations. When the boycott ceremony was held on 7 Aug. 1907, the Sandhya wrote that the Satgraha Yoga (the planetary conjunction of six planets when a part manifestation of Lord Krishna was expected) would fall on 8 Aug. 1907, and that to avoid the ominous influence of six grahas which was to continue for two and a half years on India, the people should continue to do the karma dutifully by keeping up the boycott vow - that being the command of Lord Krishna. See the Sandhya of 3 & 5 Aug. 1907; B.N.N.R., No.32. It was also reported that attacks on British officers were premeditated and carried out on Hindu religious days. The assault on Lee-Warner by Kunja Lal Bhattacharya and Basu Datt Bhattacharya was planned and executed on a day thought to be sacred by the Hindus. See the note of the assault on Sir Lee-Warner, Lee-Warner's Collection. MSS. Eur. F.92. I.O.L.
  2. Chaudhuri, N.C., The Autobiography of An Unknown Indian, pp.226-7.

It must be confessed that what Chaudhuri called Hindu nationalism was not always particularly scrupulous in the tactics it adopted to promote the boycott. Perhaps with Mutiny stories of the greased cartridge in mind, statements were made from the platform and in the press that foreign salt and sugar were polluted as they were purified by the blood of bones of cows, dogs and swines. Their use therefore entailed loss of religion and was declared sinful.<sup>1</sup> Though the newspapers went to more extreme limits in their attacks, even Banerjea was reported as asking the people not to use foreign goods on religious grounds. It was this which led the Indian Nation to criticise his methods in promoting the boycott, observing,

"If the discarding of goods is regarded as patriotic duty, why should religion be requisitioned? No, his [Banerjea's] methods are hollow and insincere and his gospel is one of hate". 2

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1. The newspapers continued to emphasise this throughout the years of the boycott and supported their contention by statements of the pandits. Handbills to the effect were also distributed. See the Amrita Bazar Patrika - 19 Aug. & 27 Sept. 1905; the Sandhya - 3 Oct. 1905; B.N.N.R., No.41; the Sanjivani - 20 April 1906; Ibid., No.18; the Daily Hitavadi - 28 Aug., & 10 Oct. 1906; & 21 April 1907; Ibid., Nos. 35 & 41 of 1906 and No.17 of 1907 respectively. Also see the Bangavasi of 27 July 1907; Ibid., No.31. Some of the newspapers were quite obscene. The Sandhya wrote that the foreign salt was the dust of "memsahibs breasts" and that condensed milk was the spittle of old men. See the Sandhya of 3 Oct. 1905; Ibid. No.41. The Government reports also point out similar incitement. Songs were also composed to advocate the boycott. One of the songs contained the following:-

"Country salt is pure and sparkling;  
It is purer than foreign salt;

In foreign salt are the bones of prostitutes."

See the Abstract of Reports on Partition by H.A. Stuart - 26 Nov. 1906; J. & P. Dept., File 4306. Vol.788 of 1906.

2. The Indian Nation - 10 & 25 Sept. 1906; B.N.N.R. No.39. Also see Sec. Home Dept., Govt. of India to Godley - 14 Nov. 1906; D.O. No.201. J. & P. Dept. File 4024. Vol. 785 of 1906. The note stated that Banerjea preached the boycott on religious grounds.

Such criticism of the leaders' methods was rare. But there was a more general complaint that they failed to practise what they themselves preached, particularly when the boycott was extended from British goods to offices under the British.<sup>1</sup> Many newspapers noted that leaders who asked the people to boycott goods were not prepared to set an example by resigning offices.<sup>2</sup> When after the formation of the province, elections to the new Legislative Council were to take place, the West Bengal leaders and newspapers made frantic efforts to dissuade the people from taking part in the elections. The Sanjivani, one of the pioneers of the idea of boycott, remarked that it was inconceivable that those who had all along protested against the partition should offer themselves for election: if they did, their action would amount to acceptance of the partition.<sup>3</sup> But the holders of offices refused to part with them, and prospective candidates were not deterred from seeking election. Surendranath Banerjea's explanation that honorary positions were not resigned because "they were a source of local influence which would be useful in the coming

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1. Lal Mohan Ghose, the first Indian who stood for parliamentary election and who was the president of the 19th session of the Indian National Congress, proposed it on 21 July 1905, at a meeting at Dinajpur. See the Bengalee - 23 July 1905; the Amrita Bazar Patrika - 25 July 1905.
  2. See the Indian Mirror - 14 Sept. 1905; The Sri Sri Priya-o-Ananda Bazar Patrika - 21 Sept. 1905; B.N.N.R., No.39 and The Sandhya - 1 Dec. 1905; Ibid., No.49. The Sri Sri Priya-o-Ananda Bazar Patrika remarked that the leaders did not have the courage of their convictions. Even Lord Curzon had resigned whereas they clung to their positions. The Sandhya pointed out that when the students abstained from attending schools and colleges, the leaders encouraged and blessed them but they did not themselves practise what they preached.
  3. The Sanjivani - 15 Feb. 1906; B.N.N.R. No.8. Also see the Sandhya - 1 March 1906; Ibid., No.10 and the Amrita Bazar Patrika - 17 July 1906; Ibid., No.29.



struggle"<sup>1</sup> scarcely rang true when his own paper, the Bengalee, had been urging people to resign honorary offices<sup>2</sup> and advising the inhabitants of East Bengal and Assam not to seek election. "Deeds and not words", wrote the paper, were required to undo the partition.<sup>3</sup> The Amrita Bazar Patrika also criticised the attitude of the West Bengal leaders and remarked that if it was necessary for the people of East Bengal to boycott the elections, it was equally incumbent upon the leaders of West Bengal to hold aloof from the Council of their province. "The latter must practise what they preach" wrote the paper.<sup>4</sup> This, however, they were not prepared to do and the Dacca Gazette was constrained to observe

"What is sauce for the gander of West Bengal  
is not sauce for the goose of East Bengal". 5

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1. Banerjea, op.cit., p.189. McLane has accepted the explanation without bothering to examine it. See McLane, op.cit., p.368.
  2. The Bengalee - 1 May 1906. The Sandhya had earlier criticised the divergence in Banerjea's preaching and actions. It wrote that Banerjea was carrying on the agitation against the rulers in order to become himself a ruler, and "wished to have his revenge on the present rulers for their dismissal of him from the Civil Service". See the Sandhya - 28 April 1906; B.N.N.R., No.18.
  3. The Bengalee - 29 May 1906.
  4. The Amrita Bazar Patrika - 28 Aug. 1906.
  5. The Dacca Gazette - 17 Sept. 1906; B.N.N.R. No.39. Referring to the role of Bhupendra Nath Basu, the paper wrote that he "is a double-edged knife, he cuts both ways. He would both associate and disassociate with Government as occasion may demand...." The Indian Nation also criticised Banerjea and sarcastically remarked that "the great apostle of boycott and resignation" gave "a proof of his practical adhesion to that movement by allowing himself to be elected" as Chairman of the North Barrackpur Municipality. See the Indian Nation - 26 Nov. 1906; B.N.N.R. No.48.

But even the support which religious sentiment and superstition lent to political and economic grievances would not long have kept the agitation going had not outside events provided a new lease of life. Brodrick's hesitant support for partition had initially encouraged the trumpet blasts of the critics.<sup>1</sup> Then came Curzon's resignation in the midst of the controversy, a great blow to the authority of the Government of India, since the people regarded it as virtually a dismissal.<sup>2</sup> Then, after partition, came the change of Ministry in England in December 1905 to give new hope. Morley's traditional liberalism in particular raised the agitators' expectations.<sup>3</sup>

For any reversal of the partition, it was, however, necessary to impress upon the new Secretary of State the gravity of the wrong done to the Bengalis. The agitation during the later months of 1905 and early 1906 had been reported to be dying down<sup>4</sup> and the boycott to be less effective;<sup>5</sup> both were now to be strengthened with renewed fervour. The Amrita Bazar Patrika therefore urged the Bengalis to continue their protests, hoping that the Liberal and Labour members in Parliament would not throw away their appeals,<sup>6</sup> but emphasising

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1. See above, pp. 160-74.
  2. Curzon to Balfour - 11 Dec. 1908; Balfour Papers, No. 49733.
  3. The Sanjivani - 4 Jan. 1906; B.N.N.R., No. 2. Also see O'Donnell, C.J., Causes of Present Discontent in India, p. 65.
  4. Summary of the Administration of the Earl of Minto in the Home Department, Minto Papers, p. 6.
  5. The Daily Hitavadi - 12 Nov. 1905; B.N.N.R., No. 45. The paper reported that the purchase of foreign cloth had increased to such an extent that fresh contracts for imports were being made. Also see the Sandhya - 1 Dec. 1905; Ibid. No. 49. The Hindoo Patriot of 22 Jan. 1906, citing the British Trade Review also referred to the failure of the boycott. Also see the Manchester Guardian of 27 Nov. and 4 Dec. 1905, which thought that the force of the boycott seemed to have spent itself.
  6. The Amrita Bazar Patrika - 22 Jan. 1906; B.N.N.R., No. 4.

that the people should not expect any help from the new Ministry unless they forced their grievances upon its attention by a vigorous and persistent agitation.<sup>1</sup>

While efforts were being made to put the agitation machinery of the two Bengals into top gear again, Morley made a speech on 26 February 1906 in the House of Commons which gave a great stimulus to the agitators. Morley seemed to be torn between his liberal ideas and the practical difficulty of setting aside the decision of his predecessor. The liberal in him noticed the disregard of Bengali sentiment with which the partition had been carried out and spurred him to declare that the partition "went decisively against the wishes of most of the people concerned". The administrator pronounced that the partition was a "settled fact" and that there was "a subsidence" of the feeling against it.<sup>2</sup> Morley's remark that the agitation was subsiding, which he later admitted to be injudicious,<sup>3</sup> led the Bengalis to show him that the fact was otherwise. The Bengalee observed that Morley's pronouncement should be the starting point of a fresh agitation<sup>4</sup> so that its falsehood might be exposed.<sup>5</sup>

Immediately after Morley's speech, protest meetings were held, and they gave a new lease of life to the agitation. C.J. O'Donnell, now a member of Parliament supplied further encouragement by urging Banerjea to continue the protest and not to be disheartened by what Morley had said. O'Donnell wrote:

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1. The Amrita Bazar Patrika - 29 Jan. 1906; the Daily Hitavadi - 23 Jan. 1906; and the Sanjivani - 26 Jan. 1906; B.N.N.R. No.4.
  2. Speech of Morley - 26 Feb. 1906; 152, H.C.Debs., 4s, cols. 842-51.
  3. Morley to Minto - 19 Oct. 1906; Morley Papers. Vol.I.
  4. The Bengalee - 28 Feb. 1906.
  5. Ibid., - 1 March 1906. Fraser thought that Morley's remark was unfortunate as it was interpreted to "mean that agitation might prevail...." See Fraser to Minto - 5 March 1906; Minto Papers, M978. The Indian Nation of 3 March 1906 was of the same view.

"Keep on agitating and do so effectively. Large mass meetings are the most useful.... You have the justest of causes and I hope you will make your voice heard. Everything depends on you in India and remember a Whig does nothing unless pressed... P.S. Have mass meetings by the dozen in every district - in doors and out of doors. Morley will yet yield." 1

Morley continued to betray his dislike for the measure both in private and in public. To Minto he wrote:

"Partition was a sad mistake; it came to us by inheritance and I still see no reason to doubt that we were right in holding on. Whether, in time, after the row has abated, we should modify the particular line of partition, we can judge some months hence". 2

In Parliament, too, he exposed the conflict he felt between his convictions and political expediency, offering only the weakest defence of partition. In his speech of 1 November 1906, Morley explained that when the Liberal Ministry came into power, the issue before them was whether partition "should be reversed or it should be upheld. The question was whether the disadvantages of setting aside all the operations which had followed did not far more than counterbalance the errors ...

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1. O'Donnell to Surendranath Banerjea - 2 March 1906; Encl. to Hare to Minto - 1 Sept. 1906; Minto Papers. M.979. Banerjea circulated the letter among the leaders and told them that he had received similar advice from Cotton. Banerjea asked that there should be "at least two or three meetings every week and the proceedings wired to the newspapers. A regular organization should be formed for the purpose...." Also see the Amrita Bazar Patrika - 15 Sept. 1906.
  2. Morley to Minto - 6 Aug. 1906; Morley Papers, Vol.I. Also see Morley to Minto - 11 Oct. 1906; Ibid. On 24 Jan. 1907, Morley wrote to Minto, "I had only to lift my finger, and the H. of C. would instantly have passed a resolution that would have overthrown the "settled fact" in a trice". It appears that the outrages in Bengal influenced Morley not to touch the partition. See Morley to Minto - 12 Nov., and 4 Dec. 1906; Ibid. When in 1909, in view of the rumours about the modification of the partition, Hirtzel, Morley's Private Secretary, asked Morley about his decision, Morley replied that "so long as he was S. of S. it was a settled fact: there might come another S/S who wd. be wiser". See Hirtzel's Diary - 14 March 1909, Home Misc. 864.

of the original change".<sup>1</sup> When he went on publicly to air the doubt that the Government, in deciding to uphold the partition, "may have taken a wrong view", the agitators in Bengal could not but react as an exasperated bull does to a piece of red rag.<sup>2</sup>

Nevertheless, it became clear that Morley, for all his liberal doubts, was not prepared to undo partition, however vigorous the agitation against it. But before tempers and hopes could cool, there came Surendra Nath Banerjea's arrest at Barisal on 16 April 1906, in connection with the holding of the Bengal Provincial Conference. This provided another opportunity to continue the agitation.<sup>3</sup> Protest meetings were held, slogans raised and processions taken out. The heather was ablaze once again. According to the Bengalee, the enthusiasm for Swadeshi, which had cooled off, was rekindled by the Barisal affair.<sup>4</sup>

Hardly had that turmoil ceased when on 6 July 1906, Fuller the Lieutenant-Governor of East Bengal and Assam resigned on the question of the disaffiliation of two schools of Sirajganj.<sup>5</sup> Irrespective of the merits and demerits of the case, or of the anxieties which Fuller's administration had caused to the Government of India and to Morley, and their desire to get rid of him, Fuller's exit like Curzon's resignation had a powerful impact on the future course of the

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1. Speech of Morley - 1 Nov. 1906; 163, H.C. Debs., 4s. cols. 1316-7. Also see his speech of 6 Nov. 1906; 164, H.C. Debs., 4s. cols. 323-5. The Bengali newspapers found Morley's speech apologetic. See the New India - 3 Nov. 1906; B.N.N.R., No. 45; the Daily Hitavadi - 9 Nov. 1906; Ibid., No. 46; the Bangavasi & the Dacca Gazette - 12 Nov. 1906; Ibid.
  2. It is significant to note that the Congress incorporated Morley's words of the partition being an "admitted error" in the resolution and asked Morley to do away with that wrong. See Report of the I.N.C., 1906 & 1907, Resolution VI & V respectively.
  3. For details see Wasti, op.cit., pp. 41-8. Also see Banerjea, op.cit., pp. 221-7.
  4. The Bengalee - 11 May 1906.
  5. See Wasti, op.cit., pp. 36-57 & McLane, op.cit., pp. 373-408.

agitation. Before Fuller's resignation was accepted, Ibbetson had pointed out that it would be a "political madness to throw Fuller over" as the agitators would regard it as an outcome of their protests. He had also stressed that they would

"employ the same weapons whenever they object to any action on our part; in the assurances that, if they only shout long enough, we shall give way".<sup>1</sup>

Ibbetson's appraisal proved true; the Bengali newspapers jubilantly attributed the resignation to their agitation and protests.<sup>2</sup> The New India wrote that a "few weeks of determined passive resistance helped to bring the Government of India almost on its knees".<sup>3</sup>

The leaders thus took the fullest advantage of any event which might be made to hearten their supporters and serve their cause. Even so the agitation might not have been so vociferous and sustained if they had not themselves been constantly supported by certain members of Parliament. They kept the flame burning and Minto constantly complained about the bad effect their interference was causing in India. Already in 1893 an Indian Parliamentary Committee had been established in Britain to bring Indian grievances to the notice of the British public. By 1906, its membership had grown to two hundred. Liberal members like H. Roberts, Sir Henry Cotton, C.J. O'Donnell, T. Hart-Davies and D.M. Smeaton kept on pressing Morley for a reversal of the partition. Constant questions put by these members and men like Keir Hardie, F.C. Mackarness and Dr. V.H. Rutherford strengthened the force of the agitation.<sup>4</sup> Even the Prince of Wales was led to

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1. Ibbetson to Minto - 29 June 1906; Minto Papers, M.978. Also Arundel to Minto - 23 July 1906; Ibid. M.979.

2. The Bengalee - 7 Aug. 1906; the Amrita Bazar Patrika - 6 & 7 Aug. & 19 Nov. 1906. Also see the Indian Mirror - 7 Aug. 1906.

3. The New India - 24 Nov. 1906; B.N.N.R., No.48. Also see Lyon to Curzon - 8 Oct. 1906; C.C., Vol.420.

4. Wasti, op.cit., pp.9-10 & 32-3. Also see Cumpston, M., "Some Early Indian Nationalists and Their Allies in the British Parliament, 1851-1906"; English Historical Review, April 1961; Vol.IXXVI, No.229., pp.279-97.

comment that

"the danger is not so much with the Congress, as from irresponsible Members of Parliament, with very scanty knowledge of India and her peoples".<sup>1</sup>

Moreover, the Indian leaders of the agitation were in constant communication with them. Money was also transmitted to assist the anti-partition movement in England.<sup>2</sup> Minto was worried by the harassment he encountered from Parliament, and disturbed about the Bengalis being in touch with "the advanced ideas at home" and by the encouragement they received from Parliament.<sup>3</sup> Disgusted with the support the agitators got from England, Minto later remarked:

"Cotton & Co., are doing all they can to keep sedition going. They ought to be hung in the Hyde Park".<sup>4</sup>

Minto, from his arrival had thus been faced with agitation on two points. He was soon to be engaged on a third, for while Fuller's exit was made the occasion for attacks by the anti-partitionists, it was also followed by a wave of resentment among the Muslims who had hitherto supported the partition almost to a man.<sup>5</sup> Protest meetings were held throughout the two Bengals and even beyond. Telegrams, showing

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1. Prince of Wales to Minto - 11 July 1906; Minto Papers, M995.
  2. Minto reported that Rs.15,000 had been sent to Henry Cotton's son and Rs.20,000 to Gokhale in London for the purpose. See Minto to Morley - 8 Aug. 1906; Morley Papers. Vol.3.
  3. Minto to Morley - 2 Jan. 1907; Morley Papers. Vol.5. Also see Minto to Prince of Wales - 6 June 1906; Minto Papers, M995.
  4. Minto to Bigge - 21 Dec. 1908; Ibid. M996. The references to the interference by members of Parliament run throughout Minto correspondence. For instance, Minto wrote that "Cottonian criticism worthless as it may be in the House of Commons, it becomes dangerous when it reaches India. It keeps the pot boiling". See Minto to Morley - 6 Jan.1909; Morley Papers. Vol.13. Also see Minto to Bigge - 14 Jan. 1909. Minto Papers, M996. ("... there are members of Parliament who deserve hanging - whom I know have been doing their best to keep up the agitation here".)
  5. For Muslim support to partition, see Ahmed, S., op.cit., pp.320-429.

sympathy with Fuller piled up at Government House.<sup>1</sup> The resignation jolted the Muslims into awareness and action and further emphasised the already recognised need for a political organisation to bring to the notice of the government their just demands. With the birth of the All-India Muslim League, on 30 December 1906, that need for an All-India organisation was satisfied.<sup>2</sup>

So far the discussion of the agitation against partition has been discussed mainly in terms of the Bengali interests involved and of action taken within the two Bengals. But, as the formation of the Muslim League indicated, partition, the boycott and the Swadeshi movements had all-India implications. Thus from 1903 onwards the Congress had passed resolutions against any partition of Bengal and had so raised the issue from a provincial to the national level.

But an examination restricted solely to the resolutions which were passed would be misleading, for from 1903 onwards there was in fact a divergence of opinion within Congress as to the advisability of giving support to the anti-partition agitation or to the movements connected with it. Much went on behind the scenes in the meetings of the Subjects' Committee, and at least in 1903 it was debated whether partition was a proper issue for the Congress platform. This was revealed by V. Krishnaswami Iyer, a delegate from Madras who while moving an amendment to the resolution against the partition scheme said:

"I do not think I am violating any secret when I say that the Subjects' Committee was not unanimous in having a resolution of this description... because it was felt that it was not a subject to be taken up by the Congress".

Krishnaswami pointed out that it was "in deference to the wishes of the Bengali gentlemen" that the resolution was

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1. For details see Encls. to L.Nos. 53, 67 & 74 from Govt. of India to Sir Arthur Godley. P.L., 1906, Vol. 34.

2. Wasti, op.cit., pp. 59-88.



supported.<sup>1</sup> Again at the Congress session of 1904, held at Bombay, there seems to have been some divergence of opinion. As pointed out earlier, Henry Cotton, the president of the session suggested a resolution in favour of the separation of Bihar as an alternative to the loss of the eastern districts. But Cotton's suggestion was "laughed down" by the Bengali delegates, who instead proposed the conversion of Bengal into a Governor's province.<sup>2</sup> In 1905 too, at Benares, the resolution seems to have aroused some controversy. Whereas in 1904, Congress had asked that Bengal be raised to the status of a governor's province, in 1905, R.C.Dutt opposed the idea,<sup>3</sup> and the resolution finally adopted spoke of placing

"the Bengali community under one undivided administration either by the appointment of a Governor and Council or by the adoption of some other administrative arrangement...".<sup>4</sup>

Here the emphasis had shifted from Bengal to the Bengali community, and the possibility of the "adoption of some other administrative arrangement" had been recognised. There was a similar policy clash over support for the boycott. A resolution on the boycott "as a last protest, and perhaps the only constitutional and effective means left to them" (Bengalis not Indians) was passed.<sup>5</sup> But this resolution when the boycott

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1. Report of the I.N.C., 1903; p.131. Also see Resolution XI.
  2. See above, p.118. Also see Report of the I.N.C., 1904, Resolution XIV. Cotton also referred to it in his presidential address, Ibid., p.45.
  3. R.C.Dutt's speech, Report of the I.N.C., 1905, p.68.
  4. Resolution, XII, Ibid.
  5. Resolution, VIII, Ibid. Gokhale's speech also shows that the Congress was unwilling to pass the resolution. Gokhale said that "boycott has a sinister meaning - it implies a vindictive desire to injure another". He also questioned if in the present state of industrialisation, the boycott could succeed. It is significant that Gokhale while summing up ~~in~~ his presidential speech put eight demands as "Our Immediate Demands" but the demand for the revocation of partition was conspicuous by its absence though he had vehemently criticised the partition in his presidential speech.

was referred to merely as an "incident" was opposed by the delegates of the United Provinces. The Hindu of 30 December 1905, reported that there was "much excitement among the Bengali and United Provinces delegates. The latter had determined that the Congress should have nothing to do with the boycott movement...."<sup>1</sup>

At this point, it is clear, inter-provincial conflict about the suitability of the partition issue as a plank in the Congress platform had merged into the wider quarrel between Moderates and Extremists. So far the Congress had conducted its agitation by constitutional methods - in co-operation with rather than disassociation with the government, through petition rather than dictation. But to the Extremists like Pal, Lajpat Rai, Aurobindo and Tilak such methods were out of date, and they seized upon the weapons of the boycott and Swadeshi movements, forged for the struggle in Bengal, and proposed to use them in a general Indian struggle against the government. British administration, and education were to be boycotted as well as goods, and Swadeshi was to be transformed into Swaraj.

To any such extension and intensification of the Bengal agitation by the Extremists, Gokhale was firmly opposed. He thought that the Bengalis had "lost their heads" and wanted to drag "other provinces with them into the mire",<sup>2</sup> by advocating an unpracticable programme of self-government, national education and a comprehensive boycott against everything English. "Mr. Pal and his party" wrote Gokhale to Wedderburn, "have been proclaiming that it is their determination either to capture the Congress if they can or else to destroy it as far as they can". Gokhale doubted if the new party "born of bitterness" and "fed on continual resentment" would achieve

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1. The Hindu (Madras) - 30 Dec. 1905. Also see the Pioneer Mail - 19 Jan, 1906. W.D.A. Khare a delegate from Bombay also deplored the apathetic attitude of the delegates from other provinces towards the boycott. See Report of the I.N.C., 1905, p.75.
  2. Gokhale to Wedderburn - 15 Sept, 1906; Minto Papers, Box 2, Series. 7. 232.

much, if only on account of what he thought to be "the constitutional incapacity of the bulk of my countrymen for any sustained exertion...".<sup>1</sup> He also felt confident that the "endless divisions and the impossibility while they last of substituting any stable indigenous Government for the present foreign one are so patent ... that the new party itself will soon be overwhelmed by the feeling which its utterances will provoke against it on all sides..."<sup>2</sup> But the presence of the rival party inhibited the action of the Moderates, who in 1906 found themselves overwhelmed by Bengalis whom they were unwilling to offend. In 1903 Bengal furnished only forty-seven of the 538 delegates attending the Congress, and in 1904 one hundred and two out of 1,010, but in 1905 their number rose to 209 out of 757, and in 1906 reached 686 out of the total of 1,663 delegates present at the Calcutta session. Their preponderance in 1906 virtually compelled the Congress to adopt resolution in support of the Bengal agitation. A proposal in the original resolution proposing the appointment of a commission of enquiry to examine the partition issue was dropped in view of Bengali opposition and in "deference to the Bengali feeling",<sup>3</sup> and a resolution demanding the reversal of partition was passed. Resolutions were also carried on Swadeshi, National Education and the boycott.<sup>4</sup> Congress thus declared the boycott of goods in Bengal to be "legitimate", because the Moderates dared not "refuse to deal with the boycott at all",<sup>5</sup> though it was regarded "with considerable doubt by leaders of Indian opinion" from outside Bengal, who raised objections to the "combination of the Swadeshi movement with any political agitation whatsoever...."<sup>6</sup> The resolution was carried but a police report

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1. Gokhale to Wedderburn - 21 Sept. 1906; Ibid.

2. Ibid.

3. Surendra Nath Banerjea's speech, Report of the I.N.C., 1906, p. 72.

4. Ibid., Resolutions VI-VIII & XI.

5. Govt. of Bengal to Govt. of India - 9 Jan. 1907; J. & P. Dept., File 231, Vol. 792 of 1907, L. No. F.A.R. 6.

6. Govt. of E.B. & A. to Govt. of India - 12 Jan. 1907; Ibid. L. No. 291-T.

claimed that the passing of the resolution by a show of hands was questioned by "many delegates and some of the Moderate Congress journals, who allege that if a count had been made, it would have been found that the majority was against the resolution".<sup>1</sup> There seems to be some element of truth in the report, for when Surat was chosen for the Congress session, the Bengali papers voiced the fear that the boycott and Swadeshi resolutions would not be passed there.<sup>2</sup> The Sri Sri Priya-o-Ananda Bazar Patrika even advocated the dropping of the boycott resolution.<sup>3</sup> As is well known, the matter was never tested because the Surat session ended in uproar. But it is noteworthy that no boycott resolution was voted upon after 1906. A "trustworthy agent" of the government who accompanied the Bengal and United Provinces delegates at the 1908 session of Madras, reported that the Bengal delegates had been keen to table a boycott resolution, but that Surendra Nath Banerjea had called a private conference on 28 December 1908, and advised them not to do so as the motion was certain to be lost. Banerjea was reported to have said:

"to move and have the resolution lost would be disastrous, as then it would mean that the Congress did not sanction or approve of the boycott, and if they kept silent that would mean that the old resolution was intact and in force and they could go on with the work of the boycott in Bengal".<sup>4</sup>

The truth was that the feeling against the partition had started to wane in Bengal; it had never provoked any strong

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1. Abstract of Police Report from Bengal - 29 Jan. 1907; Ibid.
  2. The Daily Hitavadi - 29 Nov. 1907; B.N.N.R., No.49. Also see the Navasakti - 4 Dec. 1907; Ibid.
  3. The Sri Sri Priya-o-Ananda Bazar Patrika - 5 Dec. 1907. Ibid.
  4. Sec. Gov. of India (Home Dept.) to Godley - 7 Jan. 1909; J. & P. Dept., File 264, Vol.913 of 1909. D.O. No.9 (Pol.). Gokhale also told Dunlop Smith that he had prevented the discussion of the boycott and partition issues at the Congress session of 1908. See Minto to Morley - 6 Jan. 1909; Norley Papers, Vol.13. On the Surat Congress, see The Surat Congress, Tract 1042.

reaction elsewhere. As Minto said to Morley, the idea of the Bengali spokesmen "being considered representatives of the people of India is looked down upon outside Bengal as ludicrous".<sup>1</sup> Even Gokhale was reported to have up-braided Bhupendra Nath Basu "on the selfishness of the Bengalees in preferring an anti-partition to a national campaign".<sup>2</sup>

From the beginning of 1907 onwards Minto and his officials felt that the agitation against the partition was gradually dying down.<sup>3</sup> The police reports on anti-partition agitation<sup>4</sup> supported such a view, which many prominent Indians, including the Bengalis also held. Thus in March 1907, when the Maharaja of Darbangha, who was a Congress sympathiser and who had contributed large sums to the organization during Elgin's viceroyalty, had an interview with Dunlop-Smith, Minto's Private Secretary. He told Smith that the "anti-partition agitation was really over, and that even the leaders were tired of it".<sup>5</sup> Motil Lal Ghose, the editor of the Amrita Bazar Patrika also met Smith on 13 March 1907, and Smith gathered from his talk that Ghose shared Darbangha's views that "the feeling against partition had very largely died away". Motil Lal was very despondent about the poor response the boycott had received.<sup>6</sup> Gokhale was of the same view. He even admitted that the partition had "done no one any harm, that it had created no practical grievance...". Gokhale emphasised that "nine-tenths of educated India don't care a

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1. Minto to Morley - 2 Jan. 1907; Morley Papers, Vol.5.
  2. Butler's Note - 20 April 1910; Minto Papers, Box 2 Series 7.231.
  3. Minto to Arundel - 3 Jan. 1907; Minto Papers, M995. Also see Minto's Memo. Encl. in Minto to Morley - 5 March 1907; Ibid., M 1007.
  4. There were fortnightly reports from the two Bengals on the course of agitation. They are to be found in I.H.P.P., Vols. 7312, 7313, 7587-9, 7872-4, 8150-2, 8427-9 & I.H.P.P. Pol. Procs., Vols. 7590, 7875, 8153, 8430-1, as well as in the J. & P. Dept., papers.
  5. Dunlop-Smith's Note - 13 March 1907; Encl. in Minto to Morley - 19 March 1907; Morley Papers, Vol.5.
  6. Dunlop-Smith's Note - 15 March 1907; Encl. in Minto to Morley - 19 March 1907; Ibid.

rap whether Bengal is partitioned or not...". He revealingly added that the speeches, writings and violent acts of the Extremists had done more harm to the cause of the country "than all the repressive measures of Government put together". Gokhale thought that Bengal had been treated much too leniently as compared with the Punjab<sup>1</sup> and that "Beaumont Square [in Calcutta where meetings were generally held] should have been silenced long ago".<sup>2</sup>

The opinions quoted above may be thought perhaps unrepresentative. It is worth while therefore to examine what Surendra Nath Banerjea, "the King of Bengal" and one of the chief organisers of the anti-partition agitation, had to say. We must recognise that after having led the agitation, Banerjea could not publicly declare the partition a settled fact. But he did admit it in private. In October 1907, Keir Hardie, a Labour member of Parliament, who had been on a tour of the two Bengals had an interview with Risley and told him that Banerjea and other leaders "accepted Partition as a settled fact".<sup>3</sup> When Risley pointed out that Banerjea had

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1. In April 1907, in connection with the agitation against the Punjab Colonization Bill, riots had taken place in Lahore and Rawalpindi, and the Government deported Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh. See Wasti, *op.cit.*, pp.93-7.
  2. Dunlop Smith's Note - 29 Sept. 1907; Encl. in Minto to Morley - 29 Oct. 1907; Morley Papers, Vol.13. Gokhale also had an interview with Minto and admitted that he was not personally against partition, that he recognised Muslim claims and that the anti-partition feeling was "nothing but sentimental". But Gokhale felt that the feeling had sunk deep in Bengal. Minto, however, repudiated Gokhale's claim about the feeling being deep rooted and wrote that the information the Government received, pointed to partition being dead. See Minto to Morley - 5 Nov. 1907; Ibid. Also see Minto to Arundel - 9 Dec. 1907; Minto Papers, M 995. Minto kept on repeating that partition was dead. See Gov-Gen. to Sec. of State - 31 March 1908; (Telegram) Morley Papers, Vol.29; Minto to Brodrick - 29 April 1908; Minto Papers, M. 995; Minto to Morley - 30 Nov. 1908; Morley Papers, Vol.12; Minto to Kitchener - 2 Aug. 1909; Minto Papers, M 985; Minto to Morley - 26 Aug. 1909; Morley Papers, Vol.15.
  3. Risley to Dunlop Smith - 17 Oct. 1907; Minto Papers, M981.

not said so in public, Hardinge replied that Banerjea did not dare do so.<sup>1</sup> But at the end of 1908 and the beginning of 1909, Banerjea met Baker, who succeeded Fraser as the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal and admitted that the partition was dead and that "he had only called a recent meeting for the sake of giving it a decent burial, though he knew the number of mourners would be small".<sup>2</sup> In 1909, therefore, when Minto wanted to stop the boycott celebrations, the Lieutenant-Governors of the two provinces, did not deem it desirable as they thought that the celebrations would not have much effect.<sup>3</sup> In fact they were reported to have gone flat.<sup>4</sup> Hare, the Lieutenant-Governor of East Bengal and Assam reported that the

1. Ibid.

2. Minto to Morley - 6 Jan., 1909; Morley Papers, Vol.13.

3. Minto had even suggested the Seditious Meetings Act to be in Calcutta for which Baker saw no need. See Baker to Viceroy - 5 Aug. 1909; (Telegram), Minto Papers, M 985. Also see Hare to Minto - 5 Aug. 1909; Ibid.

4. Baker to Minto - 7 Aug. 1909; (Telegram), Ibid. Also see Gov-Gen. to Sec. of State - 8 Aug. 1909; Morley Papers, Vol.29 & Minto to Morley - 26 Aug. 1909. Ibid., Vol.15. Bhupendra Nath Basu had made a promise to Baker not to allow Aurobindo Ghose to speak at the boycott anniversary meeting held at Calcutta on 7 Aug. 1909. Basu was the chief speaker at the meeting. Ironically enough, he had to appeal to the Bengalis to keep up Swadeshi by repeating the words of the much maligned and hated Curzon who at the opening of the Indian Art Exhibition on 30 December 1902, had lamented the deterioration of Indian arts and industries and said

"If Indian art, therefore, is to continue to flourish, or is to be revived, it can only be if the Indian Chiefs and aristocracy, and people of culture and high degree, undertake to patronise it. So long as they prefer to fill their palaces with flaming Brussels carpets, with Tottenham Court Road furniture, with cheap Italian mosaics, with French oleographs, with Austrian lustres, and with German tissues and cheap brocades, I fear there is not much hope".

See the Bengalee - 8 Aug. 1909. Curzon sincerely believed in the promotion of the Indian arts, and industries and sounded more Swadeshite than many of the Bengali leaders. See Curzon's Speeches, op.cit., Vol.I, pp.30-2; 34-5; 64-5; 192; 241; 328; Vol.II, p.66; Vol.III, pp.87-91.

Bengalis were "tiring of their agitation" and therefore did not expect the boycott to cause trouble any more.<sup>1</sup> This was not surprising as in 1909 Banerjea dropped the National Proclamation hitherto issued every year on the occasion of the partition anniversary.<sup>2</sup> In March 1910, Minto reported that Sinha had extracted a promise from Banerjea to renounce the boycott vow. Minto also approached Banerjea and the latter told him that he had given up imposing the vow and hinted that by the time of the boycott anniversary, "it might cease entirely to exist". Banerjea's excuse, wrote Minto

"for not publicly renouncing it altogether and at once, is, that by doing so the student boys over whom he has influence would throw him overboard as a useless leader, and would fall into the hands of the extremists".<sup>3</sup>

Writing in August, 1910, Hare felt that the "people are thoroughly reconciled to the partition and that nothing would

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1. Hare to Minto - 9 Sept. 1909; Minto Papers, Vol.985. Hare had also refused to impose the Seditious Meetings Act as he thought that the people were tired of the boycott. See Hare to Minto - 5 Aug. 1909; Ibid.
  2. The notice for holding the anti-partition anniversary on 16 Oct. 1909 was issued in the name of Banerjea, Abdur Rasul and J. Chaudhuri. But unlike previous years, it did not contain the National Proclamation which ran as follows:-  
 "Whereas the Government has thought fit to effectuate the Partition of Bengal in spite of the universal protest of the Bengalee nation, we hereby pledge and proclaim that we as a people shall do everything in our power to counteract the evil effects of the dismemberment of our province, and to maintain the integrity of our race. So God help us".  
 A. Rasul refused to sign the notice and objected to the omission of the Proclamation. Moti Lal Ghose's name was substituted for A. Rasul's. Thereupon A. Rasul and Aurobindo threatened that they would expose Banerjea and bring up the issue at the public meeting. The Proclamation was subsequently read out. See the Dharma (Calcutta) - 18 Oct. 1909; B.N.N.R., No.44.
  3. Minto to Morley - 10 March 1910; Morley Papers, Vol.17.



be so unpopular as any tampering with it".<sup>1</sup> In Bengal, Baker found that the leaders wished to put a stop to boycott celebrations but were afraid to say so publicly.<sup>2</sup> When in 1910, the boycott anniversary ended in fiasco, Minto exclaimed, "I trust we have heard the end of partition".<sup>3</sup>

Probably if the Moderates in Congress, or even the original leaders of the agitation in Bengal had their say, the issues of partition, the boycott and the Swadeshi movement would have been allowed quietly to die away. But Banerjea's excuse for not publicly renouncing the boycott vow, had some truth in it, for there certainly were extremists in Bengal anxious to take over the agitation.

Just as in Congress as a whole the Extremists had broken away from the Moderates, so in Bengal an extreme group of "terrorists" or "revolutionaries" broke away from the leaders of the agitation, believing their methods inadequate and their aims too limited. The "terrorist" group, consisting of young men of the middle class, the bhadralok, had emerged under the leadership of Barindra Kumar Ghose, the brother of Aurobindo Ghose.<sup>4</sup> Newspapers like the Yugantar of which Barindra was one of the founders, the Sandhya and Navasakti provoked the people against the Government by appealing to their patriotic spirit as well as to their prejudices. The violent criticism of these newspapers, the virulence poured against the administration and the disaffection and incitement caused by spreading stories fanned the flame of bitterness. The Yugantar attributed the ills from which Bengali society seemed to suffer to foreign rule. Subjugation by an alien race had produced "inactivity, lifelessness, impotence and want of energy" and "poverty, pestilence, scarcity and famine". The remedy was revolution, and deliverance from the

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1. Hare to Minto - 8 Aug. 1910; Minto Papers, M 987.

2. Baker to Minto - 25 July 1910; Ibid. Also see Minto to Baker - 29 July 1910. Ibid.

3. Minto to Baker - 14 Aug. 1910. Ibid.

4. Sedition Committee, 1918 - Report, p.11.

foreign yoke.<sup>1</sup> Constitutional methods could not possibly be fruitful; the caged bird would not be freed by the fowler.<sup>2</sup> The paper stressed that India, a "moneyless, foodless cremation ground full of only human skeletons", could only be rescued by adopting the American motto: "Give me liberty or give me death".<sup>3</sup>

Since the call for liberty was not enough, the appeal to religion was called into play, as when God's advice to Arjuna at Kurukṣetra was quoted:

"O Partha, do not act like an imbecile. Such conduct does not become you. Lay aside this weakness of your heart and rise up as the oppressor of your enemies".<sup>4</sup>

This was often combined with a violent appeal to racial prejudices as in the following typical quotations:

"Feringi has ousted you from your houses, has molested the chastity ... of your mothers, sisters, wives and daughters .... Feringi has caused to be reduced to dust your idols [gods] or desecrated them by garlanding them with bones of cows".<sup>5</sup>

"And you European thieves, who are accustomed to steal others' wealth, India did not hesitate to give place in her bosom even to venomous reptiles like you, when longing to earn your bread you went out committing robbery in the name of spreading civilisation.... You disciples of Jesus and preachers of equality, you have for ever banished peace from the place you have once set your foot on. Who was it that made the American Indians vanish from the earth's surface? What wicked man was that who went to Africa and

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1. The Yugantar - 12 June 1906; B.N.N.R., No.25.

2. Ibid., 1 July 1906; No.27.

3. Ibid., 14 Aug. 1906; No.34.

4. Ibid., 8 July 1906; No.28. The Mahābhārta describes the civil war fought in the kingdom of the Kurus known as Kurukṣetra. See Basham, A.L., The Wonder that was India, pp.340, 408.

5. The extract is from a booklet, Aryabhumi written by Jadu Gopal Dhar. See Govt. of E.B.& A. to Govt. of India - 25 Oct. 1907; J. & P. Dept., File 3476, Vol.826 of 1907, L.No.635-C.

snatched away infants from their weeping mothers' laps and put manacles of slavery on their tender arms? What man was that who forced opium into the mouths of the Chinese at the point of bayonet ....? Alas that you, a disgrace to humanity that you are, should be thought fit for independence and that we should not". 1

The "preaching of the gospel of force and strength as the necessary condition of political freedom" through appeals to the grim strength (śakti) of the mother-goddess Kali, encouraged the young bhadralok to resort to violence.<sup>2</sup> They were asked to give up playing games like tennis and badminton and take up lathis (sticks), sarkis (spears) and swords instead.<sup>3</sup> The Sandhya gave out that an excellent kind of bomb was being manufactured - "Kali Mai's boma" (the bomb of Mother Kali). A son was wanted from every family to practise the virtues of ksatriya and to use the "Kali Mai's boma".<sup>4</sup> The Yugantar asked Kali's devotees to perform the ceremony of śabasadhana by laying human heads at her feet.<sup>5</sup> Samitis (~~physical culture clubs~~) enrolled these zealots by administering vows and inciting them to violence.<sup>6</sup> They imitated the techniques of European anarchists and indulged in attacks on government officials, collected firearms, ammunition and

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1. The Yugantar - 2 Dec. 1906; B.N.N.R., No.49.
  2. Sedition Committee, 1918-Report, p.67. On śakti see Basham, op.cit., pp.311-2.
  3. The Sandhya - 2 May 1907; B.N.N.R., No.19.
  4. Ibid., - 6 May 1907. Also see the Sandhya of 12 June 1907; Ibid., No.25. For human sacrifices in Hinduism see Basham, op.cit., pp.336-7.
  5. The Yugantar - 12 May 1907; B.N.N.R., No.20.
  6. The vows were often administered before Kali. See Sedition Committee, 1918-Report, p.62. On the activities of Samitis and National Volunteers, see J. & P. Dept., File 3688, Vol.827 of 1907, File 4356, Vol.900 of 1908, File 708, Vol.947 of 1909, File 4289, Vol.968 of 1909, Vol.1022 of 1910 & File 3643, Vol.1030 of 1910.

explosives, and committed murders and dacoities.<sup>1</sup>

Between 1907 and 1917, one hundred and eighty-six persons were convicted for revolutionary crimes or killed during the commission of such crimes in Bengal. Of these, sixty-eight were students, sixteen teachers, nineteen land-owners, twenty-three were engaged in trade and commerce, twenty clerks and persons in Government service, seven doctors and compounders, five connected with newspapers and presses, twenty-four had no occupation, only one was a cultivator, and there was one opium smuggler. A quarter of the criminals were under twenty years of age and another forty per cent were under the age of twenty-five. Only a handful were over thirty and only one man over forty-five. Again all but a handful belonged to the Brāhman, Ksatriya and Baidya castes.<sup>2</sup>

From the above analysis it is clear that the "conspirators" belonged to the educational middle classes; that most of them were young students belonging to the highest Hindu castes. How was it that young men whose parents were doubtless respectable government servants, tradesmen and school teachers - of a class generally known for its loyalty to government formed themselves into "gangs of murderers"? Was it due to the partition agitation and its allied movements, that they

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1. In the beginning of December 1907 an attempt was made to blow up the train of the Lieutenant-Governor, Bengal. On 23 Dec. B.C. Allen, District Magistrate of Dacca was shot though not fatally. On 30 April 1908, a bomb intended to kill Kingsford, the Judge of Muzaffarpur, was thrown into the carriage of Mrs. & Miss Kennedy and killed the ladies. On 7 Nov. 1908, a Bengali student attempted to kill the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal and on 9 Nov. Nando Lal Banerji, a sub-inspector of Police who had tracked one of the Muzaffarpur murderers was shot dead. On 10 Feb. 1909, Ashutosh Biswas, the public prosecutor was murdered and on 24 Jan. 1910, Shamsul Alam, Deputy Superintendent of Police was shot dead in the precincts of the Calcutta High Court. For details see Sedition Committee, 1918-Report.
  2. Ibid., Annexure 2. The occupation of two persons and the ages of eleven people was not reported.

responded to revolutionary appeals? The answer is surely that the discontent which led the young men to terrorist activities was much deeper than dislike of partition, or even of British rule. There were more serious frustrations among the Bengali bhadralok. As Le Mesurier, the Chief Secretary of the East Bengal and Assam Government pointed out, the higher Bengali castes

"for generations past, have been supported partly by the wages of Government and zemindari service and partly by the profits of rent charges held between the cultivator and the zemindar which the easy terms of Permanent Settlement and the development during past years of alluvium have enabled those two interests hitherto to endure".

But lately, he went on, their number had increased "far beyond the proportion of the increased number of appointments available for them, while the steady rise in prices<sup>1</sup> and the tendency alike of Government and zamindars to deal with cultivating tenants direct, and not to part with the tenant right in perpetuity" made the means of livelihood for these classes less and less sufficient.<sup>2</sup> In view of the social and religious status which they enjoyed and which they were no longer in a position to maintain, they felt the pinch of economic insecurity more than any other class. They became increasingly frustrated, discontented and bitter.

The discontent and bitterness was nowhere more visible than in the schools and colleges of the two Bengals with their low paid staff and poor students. They became the feeding centres of discontent, and supplied the recruits to carry out revolutionary designs. The Director of Public Instruction, Bengal remarked,

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1. In 1907, the average price of rice was fifty-eight per cent and of maize seventy per cent above the previous norm.
  2. Le Mesurier's Memo. - 9 Dec. 1908; Minto Papers, M 998. Also see Sedition Committee, 1918-Report, pp.11-12. Also see Misra, B.B., The Indian Middle Classes, Their Growth in Modern Times, pp.390-95.

"it is in the high schools, with their under-paid and discontented teachers, their crowded, dark and ill-ventilated class rooms, and their soul-destroying process of unceasing cram, that the seeds of discontent and fanaticism are sown". 1

Both Minto and Morley had been disturbed at the tone of the extremist press, the use that was made of the public platform and the active participation in political activity of students. Minto believed that Calcutta was the hot-bed of the "indiscriminate preaching" of the "poisonous stuff".<sup>2</sup> "It is from there", he observed, "that the machinery of sedition is worked, not only in Eastern Bengal, but in the Punjab and in the frontier...".<sup>3</sup> To check the growing incidence of crime and sedition, Minto advocated repressive measures. He curtailed the liberty of press, restricted public meetings and even resorted to deportation. He justified his actions as warranted by the situation as he saw it or as it was impressed upon him by his officials. "With the Eastern populations we have to deal with, utterly unlike those of the West", he wrote to Morley, "we cannot at present afford to be otherwise than severe".<sup>4</sup> Morley appreciated Minto's difficulties but was only prepared to meet him half way.<sup>5</sup> Since Morley disliked deportation and the curbing of the press, he often questioned Minto about their necessity. This Minto resented and he accused Morley of interference. Morley, he told Lansdowne, had been "most troublesome, interfering in every little two-

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1. Annual Report of the Director of Public Instruction, Bengal for the year 1915-16, as cited in the Sedition Committee, 1918-Report, p.75.
  2. Minto to Morley - 16 Sept. 1907; Morley Papers, Vol.6.
  3. Minto to Morley - 26 Sept. 1907; Ibid.
  4. Minto to Morley - 19 Aug. 1908; Ibid., Vol.9.
  5. As for instance on Lajpat Rai's deportation which even Minto doubted "whether there was sufficient cause...". See Minto to Morley - 6 May 1908; Ibid., Vol.9. Wasti in describing Lajpat's deportation has tried to exonerate Minto which is not supported by the correspondence between Minto and Morley. See Wasti, op.cit., pp.93-8.

penny-half-penny thing, to the distraction of all other departments", and "very difficult ... to deal with, sensitive as a child and suspicious to a degree I cannot describe".<sup>1</sup> In one of his letters to Clarke, Governor of Bombay, Minto repeated his point, in less personal terms:

"India cannot be administered from home - great principles may be enunciated by a Secretary of State, but he cannot direct the daily administration of India, if he attempts to do so, he can only hamper its Government, and I have always felt that, notwithstanding the many personal difficulties with which I have had to deal, and which should never have been inflicted on me, my duty was to sail the ship as best I could...".<sup>2</sup>

Minto may have been right in his appraisal but he failed fully to appreciate the pressures on Morley both from Parliament and from his own training as a liberal. As Chirol pointed out, there was in Morley's mind

"a struggle between his natural sense of justice and historical love of accuracy and truth on the one hand, and on the other, his intense doctrinaire prejudices against a bureaucratic form of government, especially when tinged, as in India with militarism".<sup>3</sup>

Morley's hesitation in supporting the Government of India in its repressive measures was not due to any weakness on his part, nor was his interference with their affairs due to any autocratic attitude: it was for the sake of those English principles which Morley explained thus:

"while sitting tight, it is our business to keep our system fair, legal, constitutional, and all

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1. Minto to Lansdowne - 11 Dec. 1908; Minto Papers, M 996. Minto again wrote that Morley was "the most extraordinary difficult man to deal with", and that he was "most dictatorial". See Minto to Lansdowne - 3 & 12 Nov. 1909; Ibid.
  2. Minto to Clarke - 23 July 1910; Ibid., M 987.
  3. Extract of a letter from Chirol to Risley sent to Lady Minto on 6 Feb. 1907. Ibid., Box.227.

the other good things that make one sing "Rule Britannia", with a clear conscience as well as lusty lungs". 1

Nevertheless Morley supported Minto when it was found that anti-British agitation had been dangerously intensified not only in Bengal but also in the Punjab and Maharashtra. In the middle of 1907, Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh, regarded as the chief organizers of the agitation in the Punjab, were deported. In May 1907, the Government of India, issued the Regulation of Meetings' Ordinance to check the holding of seditious meetings and enforced the Ordinance in the Punjab and Eastern Bengal and Assam.<sup>2</sup> Minto seemed to be unnecessarily panicky about the spread of sedition in the native army and he wanted to introduce a press law specially devised for the army.<sup>3</sup> This gave Morley "shivers" as he thought that any such law would give a "public advertisement of our fears" about the fidelity of the army.<sup>4</sup> He therefore disallowed the bill, though he let the Government of India pass the Prevention of Seditious Meetings Act in November 1907.<sup>5</sup>

The series of measures to deal with "seditious" agitation which Minto had secured despite Morley's qualms, still did not ensure tranquillity in the two Bengals. Newspapers continued to print inflammatory articles, explosives were discovered, and plots to murder officials were unmasked. Minto, who was himself under pressure from the local governments, asked therefore for further powers. Accordingly, on 8 June 1908, the Explosives Act and the Newspapers (Incitement to Offences) Act were passed with a view to suppressing

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1. Morley to Minto - 23 April 1908; Morley Papers, Vol.3.
  2. Summary of the Administration of the Earl of Minto, pp.7-8.
  3. Minto to Morley - 12 June & 15 July 1907; Morley Papers; Vol.6.
  4. Morley to Minto - 2, 8 & 15 Aug. 1907; Ibid., Vol.2.
  5. Sec. of State to Gov-Gen. - 30 Aug. 1907; P.D., 1907, Vol.28. L. No.131. paras. 2-5. Also see Gov-Gen. to Sec. of State - 11 July 1907; I.H.Pol.Pgs., 1907; Vol.7590.



anarchical crime!<sup>1</sup> Morley again advised Minto to use the powers granted to the Government sparingly.<sup>2</sup> "We must keep order", he wrote to Minto, "but excess of severity is not the path to the bomb. It will be insupportable if you, who are a sound Whig, I who am an "autoritaire" Radical (so they say), go down to our graves (I first) as imitators of Eldon, Sidmouth, the Six Acts, and all the men and policies which we were both of us brought up to abhor".<sup>2</sup>

Minto was in fact, <sup>ready</sup> to show the forbearance which Morley desired. In May 1908, when the Bengal Government recommended the deportation of Aurobindo Ghose, Abinash Chandra Bhattachari and Saliendra Kumar Bose,<sup>3</sup> Minto refused, observing:

"If we go in for deportation, it must be on a bigger scale, and with greater certainty than we now possess, that it will be a serious matter for the deported, and not a holiday of a few months' duration".<sup>4</sup>

Minto communicated his decision to Morley with the remark that though deportation was a doubtful weapon, "we may be forced into doing so later on".<sup>5</sup> And not before long, in December 1908, Minto ordered the arrest and deportation of nine persons from the two Bengals.<sup>6</sup> The Indian Criminal Law Amendment Act was also passed.<sup>7</sup>

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1. Minto to Morley - 13 May 1908; Morley Papers, Vol.9. Also see Minto to Morley - 27 May & 4 June 1908; Ibid., Vol.10. Also see Fraser to Minto - 3 Sept. 1907; Minto Papers, M 981.
  2. Morley to Minto - 30 July 1908; Morley Papers. Vol.3.
  3. Govt. of Bengal to Govt. of India - 16 May 1908; I.H.P. Pol. Procs., 1908, Vol.7875. Also see Fraser to Minto - 19 May 1908; Minto Papers, M 982.
  4. Minto to Fraser - 30 May 1908, Ibid.
  5. Minto to Morley - 19 May 1908; Morley Papers, Vol.9.
  6. The persons deported were: Subodh Chandra Mullick, Manoranjan Guha Thakurta, Kristo Kumar Mittra, Sachindra Prasad Bose, Shamsunder Chakravarti, Aswini Kumar Dutta, Satish Chandra Chatterjee, Pulin Behari Das and Bhupesh Chandra Nag. Earlier in June 1908, Tilak had been arrested for the publication of inflammatory articles in the Kesari.
  7. Summary of the Administration of the Earl of Minto, Minto Papers, pp.11-13.

By 1908, as has been seen, anti-partition agitation was no longer a <sup>very</sup> live issue for the Congress. The deportations ordered that year, and the breaking up of revolutionary Samitis under the Indian Criminal Law Amendment Act served to curb the terrorist movement. The political situation in the two provinces accordingly showed a marked improvement. There were some isolated bomb incidents and some seventeen dacoities in the two Bengals during 1909 and 1910, so that when the Bengal Government proposed to deport another fifty-four persons, Minto <sup>showed</sup> signs of wishing to take further action. But Morley was able to persuade him that further arrests were not needed, and that it was unnecessary to adopt the Russian argument:

"by packing off train-loads of suspects to Siberia, we'll terrify the anarchists out of their wits, and all will come out right. That policy did not work out brilliantly in Russia, and did not save the lives of the Trepoffs, nor did it save Russia from a Duma...". 1

So, without resort to counter-terror, and without concession of a Duma, Minto and Morley rode out the agitation. They had been able to win the confidence of the more numerous moderate Indian opinion, gathering considerable support through the reforms they initiated. By repressive measures, they had curbed the revolutionaries. Terrorist activity did not altogether cease; there were further murders and dacoities, and even an attack on Minto's life. But Minto and his officers saw that the outrages had lost much of their political significance, and that the leaders had been isolated. Minto had set out his policy of suppression and reform to Morley in the phrase, "We must give the medicine first, and then do all we can to take the taste away". (He confessed, looking to the impending reforms, that he thought "the taste of the last dose would remain in the patient's mouth".).<sup>2</sup>

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1. Morley to Minto - 27 Jan. 1910; Morley Papers, Vol.5.

2. Minto to Morley - 30 Nov. 1908; Morley Papers, Vol.12.

The treatment worked. The moderate leaders of Indian political opinion began to rally round the government.<sup>1</sup> The Moderates' rejection of extremism, voiced at Surat in 1907, had been strengthened by their abhorrence of the murders and assassinations committed in Bengal. Early in 1908, Gokhale assured Minto that the extremists had lost the game, and on 24 December, Minto received a deputation of some hundred prominent Indians, "composed of all the great Bengal magnates", people of all shades of political thought, and "the leaders of the seditious press ... who swore allegiance to the Government of India".<sup>2</sup>

Thus by the end of Minto's term of office, the issue of partition was no longer a live one. The moderate leaders had abandoned their agitation, the extremists had lost ground, the terrorists as they were, had moved away from the limited cause of partition. As Craddock, the Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces said, the government had achieved the "suppression of the irreconcilable, and the conciliation of the reconcilable".<sup>3</sup> Writing in 1910, Minto could confidently tell Morley,

"Gokhale and Sinha, in fact everyone whose opinion is worth having - assure me that the political position generally is as I have always told you very much improved - in the sense that there is much more good will towards the Raj - much more satisfaction with our administration and much more inclination to help us".<sup>4</sup>

C.J.Jenkins, the Chief Justice of Calcutta High Court was of the same view. Congratulating Minto, he wrote:

"You will have the supreme satisfaction of knowing that you have quieted the unrest amidst many provocations... and that you will hand down an inheritance of which your successor will have no occasion to complain".<sup>5</sup>

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1. The theme runs throughout Minto correspondence especially in the later part of his reign. See Minto to Middleton - 7 Dec. 1908; & Minto to Fraser - 1 March 1909; Minto Papers, M 996, *M 984 resp.*
  2. Minto to Bigge - 14 Jan. 1909; Ibid., M 996.
  3. Craddock to Minto - 10 Aug. 1910; Minto Papers, M 987.
  4. Minto to Morley - 17 Feb. 1910; Ibid., Box. 230 series 3.
  5. Jenkins to Minto - 31 Aug. 1910; Ibid., M 987.

## Chapter VI

### Partition Undone

The question of the appointment of Minto's successor had been in the air for some time. Lord Kitchener had been pulling all possible strings to achieve for himself the coveted viceregal gaddi. He was the candidate favoured by King Edward VII, who had urged his appointment.<sup>1</sup> But Kitchener found Morley "a hard nut to crack".<sup>2</sup> Since there was strong opposition to Kitchener's candidature, Charles Hardinge, a diplomat, was chosen to succeed a soldier and administrator. For Hardinge it was the realisation of the dream of his life. He had ardently desired the position and was exultant to go to a country<sup>3</sup> where earlier, sixty years ago, his grandfather had nourished the nascent British Empire.<sup>4</sup>

Immediately after Hardinge's appointment, the King's visit to India was decided. As Prince of Wales, King George V had been to India in 1905-06 and had returned convinced that it was necessary for the British administrators to pursue a policy of "wider sympathy" towards the Indians.<sup>5</sup> He considered Curzon's partition the greatest possible mistake,<sup>6</sup> which had

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1. Hirtzel's Diary - 26 July 1909; India Home Misc., No.864-4. Also see Smith to Minto - 10 March 1910; Minto Papers, M. 996.
  2. Kitchener had also approached Morley for his support. See Kitchener to Minto - 29 April & 26 May 1910; Ibid. Also see Hardinge, My Indian Years, pp.4-5.
  3. Hardinge, op.cit., pp.1-3. Middleton thought that Hardinge was not "quite the man for the post" and wrote to Minto that Churchill's name which he thought to be a calamity to the Empire, had also been suggested. See Middleton to Minto - 2 March 1910; Minto Papers, M. 996.
  4. Viscount Hardinge, Gov-Gen. of India, 1844-1848.
  5. Nicholson, H., King George V, His Life and Reign, pp.88-89 & 166.
  6. Communication received from Librarian, Windsor Castle. Also see statement of the King to Lord Lansdowne as cited by Austen Chamberlain to Mrs. Mary Chamberlain - 13 Feb. 1912; Austen Chamberlain Papers, University Library, Birmingham. The published version of the letter was suppressed in Chamberlain, A., Politics from Inside, pp.409-12. The King's pronouncement that the partition was a mistake comes after

continued on following page

been followed by a period of unrest in Bengal and elsewhere. Now he had decided to visit India to strengthen the loyalty of the Indians.<sup>1</sup>

At first the Cabinet did not seem enthusiastic about the King's proposed visit, but its members ultimately agreed.<sup>2</sup> Minto did not favour it either, as he thought that the visit might raise expectations amongst Indians which could not be fulfilled, <sup>and would</sup> thus create disappointment.<sup>3</sup> Crewe, the Secretary of State, though favourable, feared that the success of the visit depended on the sort of benefit or grant that could be associated with it.<sup>4</sup>

In Bengal the news of the King's visit was enthusiastically received. It is especially interesting that the royal visit should have been so fervently welcomed in Bengal where agitation against the British raj had lately been so vociferous. In England itself belief in the Divine Right of Kings had long ago lost effective currency, yet, amongst a certain section of Bengali public opinion, both newspapers and leaders welcomed the King as a personification of divinity. Even in 1905-06 certain papers had written that rising against the Sovereign had no "place in the Hindu code of morality".<sup>5</sup>

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fn. 1 continued from previous page  
his accession to the throne. We have not come across any other reference as to his views on the partition in his correspondence with Minto nor does Nicholson, his biographer throw any light on it.

1. Nicholson, op.cit., p.166.
2. Crewe to Hardinge - 11 Nov. 1910; H.P., Vol.73, U.L.C.. Also see Prime Minister to King - 8 Nov. 1910; (Cabinet Letter), Asquith Papers, Bodleian Library, Oxford, Despatch Asquith 5. Also see Hennessy, J.P., Lord Crewe, p.88, & Nicholson, op.cit., p.168.
3. Crewe to Hardinge - 16 Dec. 1910; H.P., Vol.117, U.L.C.. Also see Hardinge to Crewe - 4 Jan. 1911; Ibid.
4. Crewe to Hardinge - 18 Nov. 1910; Ibid.
5. The Sri Sri Priya-o-Ananda Bazar Patrika - 4 Jan. 1906; B.N.N.R., No. 2. The Medini Bandhav wrote that "To the Hindu the Sovereign is an incarnation of the deity, the very sight of whom is, according to the Hindu Shastras, productive of great religious ceremony". The Medini Bandhav (Midnapore) - 27 Dec. 1905; Ibid., No.1.

However, at that time, because of the partition, there were elements which had advocated a boycott of the Prince.<sup>1</sup> The Amrita Bazar Patrika had proclaimed that the people of Bengal would have no interest in receiving him, yet, when he came, its editor Moti Lal Ghose, could not resist falling at the Prince's feet and bursting into tears.<sup>2</sup>

Any opposition that had existed in 1905 to giving a reception to a member of the royal family had been completely silenced by 1911. In fact, the Bengali newspapers vied with each other in their efforts to show respect and make a practical demonstration of their reverence for the King. The Samay wrote that India regarded the Sovereign as the representative of God.<sup>3</sup> The Nayak echoed this sentiment: "The Hindu considers his King and Queen as deities and he wants to pay them the same reverence".<sup>4</sup> The paper reminded the Hindus that they should not violate the commandments of the sastras by seeing him without offering gifts.<sup>5</sup> When the news broke out that the Dublin Corporation had refused to present an address to the King on his intended visit, the Nayak commented that the Hindus were a loyal people and even those who were branded as

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1. The Sanjivani - 3 Aug. 1905; Ibid. No.32. The Daily Hitavadi wrote that the Prince will be "loudly welcomed by dogs whose sole aim in life is to lick others' feet and look for the leavings of the table..." The Daily Hitavadi - 1 Nov. 1905; Ibid., No.45. Also see the Hitavarta - 19 Nov. 1905; Ibid. No.47. Also see the Sandhya of 20 Nov. 1905, the Bangavasi, the Bharat Mitra and the Dacca Prakash of 18 Nov. 1905. Ibid. Even the Indian Mirror, a moderate paper advocated that the members of the Reception Committee for the Prince should resign and people should not contribute towards the reception. The Indian Mirror - 27 July 1905; Ibid., No.30.
  2. Nevinson, op.cit., p.213.
  3. The Samay (Calcutta) - 7 April 1911; B.N.N.R., No.15.
  4. The Nayak (Calcutta) - 6 May 1911; Ibid., No.19.
  5. Ibid., 12 May 1905; No.22. In its issue of 20 May 1911, the paper wrote that the people would like to see the King as they see the good Vaswanath at Benares. No.21. Also see the Siksha (Bankipore) - 18 May 1911; Ibid., & the Hitavarta (Calcutta) - 22 June 1911; Ibid., No.26.

seditionists could not do such a discourteous act.<sup>1</sup> The Hindoo Patriot stated that the idea of refusing to pay homage to the King was repugnant even to the extremists in India, "East is East", the journal wrote, "and will always remain so unless the vices of Western Society degenerate it".<sup>2</sup> Earlier the Bengalee, inspired by "widespread feeling among the Hindu community in Bengal" had advocated the Talut ceremony by weighing the King in gold and silver.<sup>3</sup> The Reception Committee's endorsement of the suggestion surprised Hardinge who opposed it and the idea was dropped.<sup>4</sup>

From the outset the British Government was worried about the expenses involved in connection with the visit of the King and the conferment of an appreciable boon on the Indians. When the question of inviting the Indian chiefs and princesses to the Coronation ceremony arose, it was decided to let such princes who desired to come to England know that "they were not invited by the Government" and should meet their own expenses.<sup>5</sup> Similarly the Cabinet was not prepared to meet the expenses of the durbar from the Imperial funds and Crewe informed Hardinge that they would probably agree only "to land the Royal party at your hospitable shores at our cost ..." and nothing more than that.<sup>6</sup>

More difficult of solution proved the problem of a boon. Chirol was the first to stress the point that unless the King's visit was accompanied by some conspicuous boon which would appeal to the Indians and catch their imagination, the

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1. The Nayak - 6 April 1911; Ibid., No.15. the Bihar Bandhu (Bankipore) - 13 April 1911; Ibid., & the Amrita Bazar Patrika - 18 April 1911; Ibid.

2. The Hindoo Patriot - 7 April 1911; Ibid.

3. The Bengalee - 24 March 1911; the Amrita Patrika - 27 March 1911; B.N.N.R., No.13, & the Hitavadi - 21 April 1911; Ibid., No.17.

4. Hardinge to Jenkins - 20 May 1911; H.P., Vol. 81, U.L.C. Also see Hardinge's diary - 11 March 1911; H.C., Vp2, K.A.O.

5. King to Hardinge - 16 Dec. 1910; H.P., Vol.104, U.L.C.

6. Crewe to Hardinge - 11 Nov. 1910; Ibid., Vol. 101, Also see Nicholson, op.cit., pp.167-8.

visit would be fruitless.<sup>1</sup> Hardinge was as yet new to India and it took him some time to appreciate the significance of boons. He thought Chirol's suggestion "somewhat embarrassing" as raising unnecessary expectations in India. However, he discussed the question in the Council and found that not much could be done. A remission of taxation would be costly, while a reduction of the salt tax would hardly touch the masses. Only small concessions in the form of the release of prisoners, the setting aside of some land for colonisation by soldiers, and the wiping off a few famine loans seemed to offer a possible way out. "We are too poor" wrote Hardinge to Crewe, "to make big ones".<sup>2</sup>

Nevertheless both the King and the home authorities were concerned about the question of a boon. Crewe made two suggestions, that Britain should make a gift for the encouragement of technical education in India and that the British Government should take over the cost of the Indian establishment in London. However, he did not feel sure that he would be able to persuade the Cabinet "to anything handsome being done from here".<sup>3</sup> He asked Hardinge to look into the possibilities of the remission of fees in elementary schools but feared that this might add an extra burden of unknown dimensions to the public charges.<sup>4</sup> He also promised to look into the "thorny question" of the grant of Commissions to Indians in the army, as Hardinge had suggested this as a possible boon. Crewe was to bring before the Cabinet the boon problem which in his opinion involved "a sacrifice for the tax payers."<sup>5</sup>

Briefed by advice from various quarters,<sup>6</sup> Hardinge

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1. Chirol to Hardinge - 9 & 17 Nov. 1910; H.P., Vol.92, U.L.C.
  2. Hardinge to Crewe - 8 Dec. 1910; Ibid., Vol.117.
  3. Crewe to Hardinge - 16 Dec. 1910; Ibid.  
The idea of a gift for technical education came from Chirol.
  4. Crewe to Hardinge - 23 Dec. 1910; Ibid. MacDonnell had suggested that free primary education be announced as a boon. See Bigge to Hardinge - 22 Dec. 1910; Ibid., Vol.104.
  5. Crewe to Hardinge - 30 Dec. 1910; Ibid., Vol.117.
  6. Clarke, the Commerce Member wrote that the spectacular aspect of the durbar would only appeal to the people from England. He suggested the conferment of commissions to Indians in the army and pressed for the gift of a crore of rupees from home. See Clarke to Hardinge - 25 Dec. 1910; Ibid., Vol.82.



realised the importance of a boon and requested Crewe to persuade the Cabinet to give a crore of rupees (half a million pounds) for the encouragement of technical education or to do something which might have "the most tremendous effect in India". Such a gift from the British Government would, in Hardinge's opinion, silence those who charged it with exploiting India in the interests of Lancashire.<sup>1</sup> He also approached Bigge for his help.<sup>2</sup>

The account which Hardinge received from England about the prospects of a boon was discouraging. Bigge, King's Private Secretary, felt that it was an "almost impossible problem" for England to please the whole of India, as difficult as to gratify "all Europe by one act". The suggestion that the British Government should meet part of the cost of India's establishment at home would rend "the very veil of the Treasury ... at the sound of such an idea".<sup>3</sup> In another letter Bigge wrote discouragingly to Hardinge:

"It is a very difficult question, and it seems there is nothing worth giving that would not involve large amount of money".<sup>4</sup>

Hardinge, however, continued to press the home authorities. To him the central idea of the boon was something that would "appeal to the imagination and impressionability of the Indian people". He knew of nothing better that would achieve this object than the grant of money which he had asked for. He went so far as to say that such an act on the part of Britain would bring all the doubtful moderates in India "to the side of loyalty, and we shall hear no more of sedition for a very long time". "It would", he added, "be a very cheap method of buying loyalty and peace, especially when we compare it to the price of a single Dreadnought".<sup>5</sup>

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1. Hardinge to Crewe - 4 Jan. 1911; Ibid., Vol.117.

2. Hardinge to Bigge - 5 Jan. 1911; Ibid., Vol.104.

3. Bigge to Hardinge - 13 Dec. 1910; Ibid.

4. Bigge to Hardinge - 5 Jan. 1911; Ibid.

5. Hardinge to Crewe - 25 Jan. 1911; Ibid., Vol.117

Earlier, however, another method for allaying discontent had been suggested as an alternative to the boon. This was the raising of Bengal to a Governor's province on the pattern of Madras and Bombay.<sup>1</sup> The King himself spoke to Crewe<sup>2</sup> about it and wrote to Hardinge:

"I hope that you will consult all the best men in India to consider what would be the best way to mark the fact of the first visit of the King-Emperor to India. Why not make the two Bengals into a Presidency like Bombay and Madras; this would flatter the Bengalis very much, allay discontent and stop sedition; and would be well worth the extra cost to the country..."<sup>3</sup>

In his book My Indian Years, Hardinge referring to his impressions within two days of his arrival in India, writes that "Curzon's policy of the partition of Bengal, ... was severely criticized on all sides" and the general unrest was attributed to that policy.<sup>4</sup> The book was written many years after Hardinge had left India and not without a motive of justifying his own policies, especially the modification of the partition. Yet until June-July 1911, neither in his correspondence nor in his private diaries did Hardinge write much about the partition, about the general unrest, or about the antagonism to the measure. On the other hand he reported to Crewe, "... everybody tells me that there is a marked improvement and that things are quieting down".<sup>5</sup> His diary of 25

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1. Bigge to Viceroy - 13 Dec. 1910; Ibid., Vol.104.

2. Crewe to Hardinge - 16 Dec. 1910; Ibid., Vol.117. Crewe wrote that "Somebody had inspired" the king with the idea. As early as Aug. 1910, the King had spoken to Crewe about it and cited Walter Lawrence, once Curzon's Private Secretary, as to having told the King "how mistaken Curzon had been both in the matter of the change itself and in the particular methods employed". See Crewe to Hardinge - 11 Aug. 1911; Ibid., Vol.113. Also see Crewe to Hardinge - 27 Jan. 1911; Ibid. In this letter too, the King cited Walter Lawrence's opinion.

3. King to Viceroy - 16 Dec. 1911; Ibid., Vol.104.

4. Hardinge, op.cit., p.11.

5. Hardinge to Crewe - 24 Nov. 1910; H.F., Vol.117, U.L.C.

November 1910, contains the following opinion:-

"... I cannot help feeling that pacification is in the air & that it would be very fatal to miss the present opportunity". 1

Thus Hardinge's appraisal of the situation was no different from Minto's, when at the close of his strenuous reign the latter observed that the political situation had "very much improved ... in the sense that there is much more good will towards the Raj - much greater satisfaction with our administration and much more inclination to help us...".<sup>2</sup>

In his book, however, Hardinge greatly exaggerated "the state of political unrest and terrorism" when he described dacoities and the assassinations "as almost of daily occurrence".<sup>3</sup> This statement is not supported by evidence from his papers. In fact they contradict the impression which the book gives. In November, 1910, he wrote to Grey, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, that the people seemed to be "weary of sedition and anxious for conciliation". He also communicated his impressions to Morley in the same tone.<sup>4</sup> At the end of December 1910 he informed Crewe that the situation in Bengal was slowly but gradually improving<sup>5</sup> and notified the King accordingly.<sup>6</sup> Nor did Hardinge have cause to complain about the activities of the students, who had been a source of trouble for Minto's Government. He found that they were no longer in politics, but were turning their energies to games. "In fact" wrote Hardinge "they have become normal young men".<sup>7</sup> In April, 1911, Butler, after his tour of East Bengal, though concerned about the amount of crime in the province, thought

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1. Hardinge's diary - 25 Nov. 1910; H.C., VP2, K.A.O. Also see Hardinge to Clarke - 25 Nov. 1910; H.P., Vol.81, U.L.C.

2. See above, p.222.

3. Hardinge, op.cit., p.14.

4. Hardinge to Edward Grey - 30 Nov. 1910; & Hardinge to Morley - 30 Nov. 1910; H.P., Vol.92, U.L.C.

5. Hardinge to Crewe - 28 Dec. 1910; Ibid., Vol.117.

6. Viceroy to King - 19 Jan. 1911; Ibid., Vol.104.

7. Hardinge to Crewe - 1 March 1911; Crewe Papers, U.L.C. Also see Hardinge to Chirol - 2 March 1911; H.P., Vol.92. U.L.C.

that the evil had "passed from the stage of politics to the stage of police administration".<sup>1</sup> Hardinge wrote again to the King in May 1911 and informed him of the generally improved situation. He did complain about the lawlessness in Eastern Bengal but did not attribute it to sedition or political unrest.<sup>2</sup>

That there were dacoities in Bengal and Eastern Bengal and Assam was nothing new. Dacoities and river piracy had been widespread in many districts of Eastern Bengal even before the partition. Some of these districts were known for lawlessness and disorder.<sup>3</sup> Outbreaks occurred with increased frequency after the partition, and did not cease even after its modification. These dacoities and the elements of disorder, after the partition, were partly due to political unrest in the two Bengals. But during the later years - towards the close of Minto's period - they seemed to "indicate robberies by mere "banditti" recruited largely from the student class and aiming at plunder for themselves".<sup>4</sup> This was what Minto wrote in August 1910. Hardinge, six months after his arrival in India had no reason to differ from Minto and pointed out the mistake of attaching any political importance to the dacoities. He attributed them to the peculiar conditions of Eastern Bengal and the state of police administration.<sup>5</sup> When the Times attributed the dacoities to sedition, Hardinge was angry and wrote, "... they do not know what they write. They talk of cases of dacoity in Eastern Bengal as cases of sedition. They are simply cases of crime,...".<sup>6</sup> Even as late as June 1911 Hardinge described them as "endemic as a form of vulgar and

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1. Butler to Hardinge - 4 April 1911; Ibid., Vol.81.

2. Viceroy to King - 4 May 1911; Ibid., Vol.104.

3. For details see Bramley, P.B., Trade Conditions and Crime on Navigable Waterways in Bengal, Assam and the United Provinces.

4. Minto to Chirol - 11 Aug. 1910; Minto Papers, M996.

5. Hardinge to Montagu - 5 April 1911; H.P., Vol.92, U.L.C.  
Also see Hardinge to Butler - 9 April 1911; Ibid., Vol.81.

6. Hardinge to Crewe - 11 April 1911; Ibid., Vol.117.

remunerative crime. There is nothing political about them at all at present, and their existence is largely due to the small number of the police in densely populated areas and the inefficacy of their measures to put an end to them..."<sup>1</sup>

However, it would be a mistake to suppose that everything was quiet and smooth. Neither Minto nor his officials claimed that unrest had disappeared completely from India. Minto thought that for a variety of causes - racial, political, economic and educational - "we can never expect a universally contented India..." In his opinion this was the inevitable result of the growing ambitions of the Indians, and of the "natural products of undigested education", and of a growing sympathy with many populations outside India". Minto unhesitatingly admitted that the future of India was "full of difficulties and possible dangers".<sup>2</sup> He recognised the "advent of a new state of affairs". "We must prepare", wrote Minto, "to deal with new conditions - conditions, too, which will continue to change as years go on".<sup>3</sup> Here again Hardinge did not differ from his predecessor's judgement and thought that the enlarged councils which he described a necessary evolution had introduced a new spirit in India which would "make the country far more difficult to govern in future..."<sup>4</sup>

To Minto the assassinations and murders carried no more political weight than "the Tottenham murders did at home ...". He thought that they did not indicate a general detestation of British rule but represented "that hatred of a ruling power which is common to the anarchists of the Western world as well as to India..."<sup>5</sup> He believed that though the cult of the bomb had caught hold in India<sup>6</sup> the outrages did not

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1. Hardinge to Crewe - 1 June 1911; H.P., Vol.117, U.L.C.

2. Minto to Chirol - 18 May 1910; Minto Papers, M986.

3. Minto to Craddock - 15 Aug. 1910; Ibid.

4. Hardinge to Ponsonby - 7 May 1911; H.P., Vol.92, U.L.C.

5. Minto to Fraser - 1 March 1909; Minto Papers, M996.

6. Minto to Hutton - 2 Feb. 1909; Ibid. Also see Minto to Lansdowne - 3 Feb. 1909 & Minto to Arundel - 8 Feb. 1909; Ibid.

indicate the condition of India as a whole.<sup>1</sup> When two political assassinations took place in June 1911, Hardinge thought that it would be a mistake "to take undue alarm at these isolated murders". Indeed, he expected such things to happen periodically, as a result of the incitement by seditious papers.<sup>2</sup> Writing on 29 June 1911, Hardinge once again tried to remove any apprehensions about general unrest and informed Crewe that anarchy had taken root in India but the country as a whole regarded the murders "with intense detestation".<sup>3</sup>

In 1911, there were many trials for sedition pending in the two Bengals. Hardinge, in view of the King's visit was eager to conclude them as soon as possible. Immediately after his arrival, Hardinge wrote to Clarke that he felt it desirable to brighten the horizon by a policy of relaxation in prosecutions.<sup>4</sup> He also spoke to Sir Lawrence Jenkins in the same manner and impressed upon him the desirability of pacification. On 28 November 1910, he called Baker, the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, and talked about various cases.<sup>5</sup> Hardinge also noted that Crewe favoured the speeding up of the abortive prosecutions.<sup>6</sup>

At the same time Justice Fletcher of the Calcutta High Court told Hardinge that the plaintiffs in the Midnapur case desired a compromise. Fletcher urged Hardinge to try to arrange it. Hardinge spoke to Kenrick, the Advocate General of Bengal, and extracted from him "an offer of compromise".<sup>7</sup> But the attempt failed as Kenrick insisted that the charges should be fully paid for by the plaintiffs. To Hardinge this was very annoying.<sup>8</sup>

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1. Minto to Jenkins - 4 Aug. 1910; Ibid., M 987.

2. Hardinge to Crewe - 22 June 1911; H.P., Vol.117, U.L.C.

3. Hardinge to Crewe - 29 June 1911; Ibid.

4. Hardinge to Clarke - 25 Nov. 1910; H.P., Vol.82. U.L.C.

5. Hardinge's diary - 28 Nov. 1910; H.C., Vp2, K.A.O.

6. Crewe to Hardinge - 23 Dec. 1911; H.P., Vol.73.

7. Hardinge's diary - 2 Jan. 1911; H.C., Vp2, K.A.O. Also see Kenrick to Jenkins - 2 Jan. 1911; H.P., Vol.81, U.L.C.

8. Hardinge's diary - 10 Jan. 1911; H.C., Vp2, K.A.O.

In spite of the encouragement Hardinge received from the judges of the High Court, he found the task difficult and had to face a certain amount of opposition from some members of the Council, especially Sir John Jenkins, the Home Member, who was against any interference in the judicial proceedings.<sup>1</sup> Hardinge regarded this as "carrying decentralisation too far". He decided to interfere, this time effectively, in prosecutions which, in his opinion, were "dragging on their weary course" and which he wanted to be forgotten months before the King visited India "as a messenger of peace and good will amongst all classes".<sup>2</sup>

Hardinge spoke to Sir Lawrence, and arranged with him that the accused in the Khulna Gang case should be approached through their counsels to plead guilty, on the understanding that they would be let off but would be prepared to appear for sentence when called for. Sir Lawrence offered to speak to Sinha.<sup>3</sup> Hardinge also directed Baker to arrange a compromise with the accused.<sup>4</sup>

Baker accordingly asked Duke, a member of his Council and Chapman, the Legal Remembrancer and Judicial Secretary of the Bengal Government to take steps to arrange it. Chapman personally approached Neogi, counsel for one of the accused, to propose the compromise but Neogi disapproved of the idea, asserting that he would get his client off, and "if not, let him be sentenced".<sup>5</sup> Meanwhile the Chief Justice had approached Sinha to take steps to get the accused to plead guilty, and Sinha managed to arrange this with the counsels for the accused. However, the matter was taken up by Baker in his Council, and the risks and objections to Hardinge's plan were pointed out. Duke suggested as a better arrangement that the

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1. Hardinge to Crewe - 4 Jan. 1911; H.P., Vol.117, U.L.C.
  2. Viceroy to King - 19 Jan. 1911; Ibid., Vol.104.
  3. Hardinge to Baker - 23 March 1911; Ibid., Vol.81.
  4. Baker to Du Boulay - 17 March 1911; Simla Records-5-1911. Govt. of India Pol. Dept., Procs., May 1911, Proc. 16, Crewe Papers, Encl. Vol. Part II, U.L.C.
  5. Duke to Baker - 17 March 1911; Ibid.

accused should plead guilty and receive sentence and then they could be released on some suitable occasion. Duke's plan could not be adopted as the Chief Justice had already intervened, as was well known to the people, and the matter had proceeded too far to be undone. Since there was no other alternative, Baker agreed to adhere to this course. He had no hesitation in telling Hardinge that overtures to the accused ought not to have been made by the Chief Justice independently of the Bengal Government, and "indeed without their knowledge" and that he regarded the action as unconstitutional.<sup>1</sup>

Hardinge now told Baker what had transpired between himself and Sir Lawrence about seeking the help of Sinha. He also defended Sir Lawrence's action. Whether Hardinge's own interference had been unconstitutional or not, Hardinge did "not care to discuss" and had "no fear as to the verdict of anybody on that score".<sup>2</sup> Hardinge sent the following statement to Baker with instructions that it should be read out by the Advocate General after the accused had pleaded guilty:-

"My Lord, the prisoners have pleaded guilty in this case. Under the circumstances, I may be permitted to say that the Government have decided, on grounds of clemency, not to press anything further against them. It is to be hoped that, now that they have realized the enormity of the acts of which they have been guilty, they will make a fresh start in life and and be honest citizens hereafter".<sup>3</sup>

The case was heard by the High Court on 1 April 1911. Kenrick, while presenting the Government case did not restrict himself to the statement prepared for him. He referred to the gravity of the charges against the prisoners, then said that he had received instructions from the Government to show clemency, and hoped that the judges might be disposed to release the accused, on their entering into bonds to appear

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1. Baker to Hardinge - 22 March 1911; Ibid., paras.3-6.
  2. Hardinge to Baker - 23 March 1911; H.P., Vol.81, U.L.C.
  3. Hardinge to Baker - 25 March 1911; Ibid. Hardinge had drafted the statement which was slightly changed by Ali Imam, the Law Member.



before the court and receive the sentence when called upon, and that, in the meantime, "they should be of good behaviour and keep the peace". Kenrick told the court that the suggestion emanated from the Government and not from him.<sup>1</sup> He omitted the last sentence of the statement given above.<sup>2</sup> The accused were released.

Hardinge was unhappy about the conduct of the case and called for an explanation from the Advocate General as well as from the Government of Bengal. Kenrick assured the Government that it had not been his intention to implicate the Imperial Government and that things had happened as they did because he had not been directly consulted.<sup>3</sup> However, Hardinge admonished the Bengal Government as well as Kenrick.<sup>4</sup>

It is not with the legality or the constitutional aspect of the case that we are concerned; our concern is rather with the impression which was created by the interference of the Viceroy. In a letter published by the Statesman, the move was interpreted as "dangerous and misguided leniency" and based on the subordination of law and justice and motivated by the approaching pageant of the durbar. "To recoil from punishment, where punishment is justly due ... is to invite the belief that leniency is the outcome of fear and not the prompting of civic generosity". The results of such interference with justice, the writer thought, would be disastrous. "Conspiracy will henceforth be regarded as a free art, assassination as pardonable...", provided the sinners could obstruct an Emperor's survey of his dominions. Finally the paper reminded the Government of the danger of the executive working in collaboration with the judiciary and of the fact that the Congress had often demanded that the two should be separated.<sup>5</sup>

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1. The Statesman - 2 April 1911. Also see Hardinge to Baker - 11 April 1911; H.P., Vol.81; Hardinge called Kenrick's action as "culpable".
  2. Baker to Hardinge - 7 April 1911; Ibid.
  3. Kenrick to Govt. of Bengal - 24 April 1911; Simla Record, op.cit.
  4. Hardinge to Baker - 29 May 1911; Ibid.
  5. The Statesman - 7 April 1911. (Article under "Indignatio").

But this was the view of an Anglo-Indian paper. The reaction of the Bengali Press is not to be judged merely from the momentary welcome they gave to the move but from the expectations which were aroused and the demands which they subsequently made. The Amrita Bazar Patrika, welcoming the action, regretted the fact that the same policy was not adopted in every political case. It asked for the withdrawal of the Press Act and other repressive measures and the release of political prisoners.<sup>1</sup> The Khulnavasi asked for the withdrawal of the punitive police from Khulna and at a meeting held in the town the speakers demanded the refund of the punitive taxes already realised.<sup>2</sup> The Sanjivani thought that had Minto's Government pardoned those convicted in the Alipore case, the lives of the police officers Ashutosh Biswas and Shamshul Alam would have been saved. When, in the Howrah Gang case, seventeen of the accused were let off, this paper asked the Government to punish those officials who had been responsible for sending the accused to jail.<sup>3</sup> The papers demanded that the Government should compensate those who were confined in prison.<sup>4</sup> The comments of other newspapers were, however, different. The Indian Mirror reported that the fear was being expressed in some quarters that Government's action would be misconstrued as a sign of weakness.<sup>5</sup> The Hitavarta commented that the Government had acted unwisely by releasing dangerous dacoits back into society.<sup>6</sup> The Musulman also questioned the Government's wisdom in releasing "murderers, burglars, robbers

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1. The Amrita Bazar Patrika - 3 April, 15 & 20 May 1911; B.N.N.R., Nos. 14, 20 & 21 respectively. Also see the Nayak - 6 April 1911; Ibid., No.15.
  2. The Khulnavasi (Khulna) - 8 & 15 April 1911; Ibid., Nos.15 & 16 respectively.
  3. The Sanjivani - 6 & 22 April 1911; Ibid., Nos. 16 & 17 respectively.
  4. Ibid., 25 May 1911; No.20. Also see the Sri Sri Priya-o-Ananda Bazar Patrika - 25 May 1911; the Hitavadi - 26 May 1911; & the Basumati - 27 May 1911; Ibid., No.22.
  5. The Indian Mirror - 4 April 1911; Ibid., No.14.
  6. The Hitavarta - 6 April 1911; Ibid., No.16.

and shedders of human blood" in its desire to present a "clean bill to the King".<sup>1</sup>

Hardinge allowed his policy of "reconciliation and pacification" to overstep its political and administrative limits and himself played the role of a broker between the Justices of the Court and the accused. He even dragged the Chief Justice from his high position as an imperial adjudicator to that of a negotiator.<sup>2</sup> Such a step had obvious dangers as the offer of compromise did not remain a secret. Hardinge had tried to act like a diplomat; but the methods he had formerly practised in the closed council chambers of Europe, where proceedings and documents often remained secret, were scarcely appropriate in the open courts of Calcutta where these cases formed the subject matter of unending gossip and newspaper comments. If prosecution in such cases was difficult or unjustifiable, the best course would have been to drop them or proclaim amnesty. It may be argued that the Government by doing so would have lost prestige, but it certainly did not retain prestige by intervening in the case. The Nayak while justifying the action, made the pertinent comment that for the Government the problem of disposing of the cases pending in the courts was like the attempt of a snake to eat a musk-rat, which was both hard to swallow and difficult to throw out.<sup>3</sup> Thus Hardinge's attempt of letting off a few accused was unlikely to move public opinion significantly in Government's favour especially when Tilak languished in jail. Moreover, the compromise did not stop the occurrence of dacoities in

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1. The Musulman (Calcutta) - 23 June 1911; Ibid., No.27.
  2. Surprisingly enough, the Viceroy who confessed to having used the Chief Justice as a "trump", later criticised the actions of the Calcutta High Court for their conciliatory attitude. Hardinge wrote that "so long as Sir Lawrence Jenkins remains Chief Justice, I always feel that we must give up the Calcutta High Court as a bad job". See Hardinge to Carmichael - 10 Nov. 1912 & 7 June 1912; H.C., Vols. Va 8 & Va 9 respectively. K.A.O.
  3. The Nayak - 5 April 1911; B.N.N.R., No.15.

the two Bengals. On the other hand they were reported to have taken place immediately after the case.<sup>1</sup>

It is true that Hardinge found the administration in the two Bengals weak and faulty. He ascribed it to the policy of non-interference by the Government of India in previous years.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless he hoped that in a short time order would prevail in the distracted provinces.<sup>3</sup> It is interesting to note that as on the question of the general political unrest, so on the issue of dacoities in the two Bengals, Hardinge in his private letters did not attribute the causes of bad administration to partition.<sup>4</sup>

It is in this context that Hardinge's attitude to the partition problem has to be studied. Originally both Crewe and Hardinge were not at all inclined to tamper with the "settled fact". Before proceeding to India to preside at the 1910 session of the Indian national Congress, Wedderburn broached the subject with Crewe, who replied that it was "not practical politics..."<sup>5</sup> In agreeing to receive a deputation from the Congress, Hardinge made sure that no mention was made of the partition issue, as it was now a "closed book".<sup>6</sup> Hardinge accordingly informed Crewe that there was no question

1. Ibid., 2 & 23 April 1911; Ibid., No.17. Also see the Indian Mirror - 9 April 1911; Ibid., No.15.

2. Hardinge to Crewe - 25 May 1911; H.P., Vol.117, U.L.C.

3. Hardinge to Chirol - 28 May 1911; Ibid., Vol.92.

4. To Montagu & Crewe Hardinge wrote that the difficulty of administering E.B. & A. was due to its waterways and the absence of roads. See Hardinge to Montagu - 5 April 1911; Ibid., & Hardinge to Crewe - 1, 29 June, 6 & 13 July 1911; Ibid., Vol.117, & Hardinge's diary - 7 & 8 July 1911; H.C., Vp2, K.A.O. Also see Encl. in Hardinge's to Crewe of 13 July 1911; Crewe Papers, Encl. Vol.III, Part III, U.L.C.

5. Crewe to Hardinge - 25 Nov. 1910; H.P., Vol.117, U.L.C.

6. Hardinge to Wedderburn - 9 Dec. 1910; Ibid., Vol.81.

of re-examining the dead issue.<sup>1</sup>

When the King wrote to Hardinge about considering the possibility of raising Bengal to a Governor's province,<sup>2</sup> Hardinge regarded the idea with apprehension - "a reversal of the policy of the last few years". He informed the King that a return to the pre-partition system was "quite impossible" as the charge would be "far too unwieldy". However, he promised to examine whether it would be possible to give a Governor with Commissioners to the two Bengals.<sup>3</sup>

After discussing the matter with some members of his Council Hardinge dismissed the idea of revising the old policy. On 25 January 1911, he informed Crewe that it would be "a concession to noisy clamour" and would be a severe blow to the Indian loyalists who were "by far the largest section" of the population. He felt that such a reversal would be potent with dire consequences of anarchy in the administration of the two Bengals and thought it unfair to the interests of the new province, which was entitled to the "same amount of deference and dignity as the other Provinces of India". Further, such a policy would convince the Indians that it was "only necessary to go in for sedition and crime to eventually attain any object" that they might desire. He suggested to let the <sup>idea</sup> ~~suggestion~~ "quietly drop altogether".<sup>4</sup> He also notified

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1. Hardinge to Crewe - 15 & 22 Dec. 1910; & 4 Jan. 1911; Ibid. Vol.117. The members of the Congress deputation to Hardinge were as follows:- Rash Behari Ghose, Surendra Nath Banerjea, Bhupendra Nath Bose (Calcutta); D.E.Wacha, M.A.Jinnah, D.A. Khare & G.K. Gokhale (Bombay); Syed Muhammad, N. Subha Row (Madras); Madan Mohan Malaviya, Ganga Prasad Varma (U.P.); Mazharal Haq (Bihar); Lala Harkishan Lal (Lahore); H.S. Gour & R.N.Mudhalkar (Central Provinces). The members of the deputation did not raise the partition issue in the address. See Hardinge's Memo - 12 Jan. 1911; Crewe Papers, Encl. Vol.I, Part I, U.L.C.
  2. See above, p.129.
  3. Viceroy to King - 5 Jan. 1911; H.P., Vol.104. Hardinge thought that the position of the Governor would be a "sinecure". Like Curzon he believed that a Governor with his seat at Calcutta would be overshadowed by the Viceroy.
  4. Hardinge to Crewe - 25 Jan. 1911; H.P., Vol.117, U.L.C.

Bigge that the idea was "quite impracticable" and that it was "desirable that not a whisper of such possibility should be heard, as it would only arouse afresh the agitation which has now practically subsided".<sup>1</sup>

Hardinge's letter of 25 January 1911, to Crewe crossed that of Crewe to Hardinge of 27 January 1911, in which Crewe discussed the "thorny question" in greater detail. On 23 January 1911 Crewe saw the King, who had reopened the Bengal problem. Crewe wrote that he thought the King "quite wrong". More than anything else, the King "had set his heart upon doing something which would, to some extent, satisfy that section of opinion in India which regarded partition as a mistake". Crewe also informed Hardinge that the King himself "had always disliked the change" and had been recently supported in that view by Walter Lawrence and others.<sup>2</sup>

Now that the King was interested in announcing the change if possible at the Durbar,<sup>3</sup> Crewe gave it his consideration. There was, in his opinion, no question of reverting to "the status quo ante Curzonem", as even the Congress leaders did not desire it. He thought that what they wanted was to put the two Bengals under a Lieutenant-Governor, or a Governor, with Chief Commissionerships for Assam, Bihar and Orissa. Such a policy, in Crewe's opinion, would reverse the old system not for any administrative advantages but "for the gratification of Bengali sentiment". As for the idea of establishing a Presidency for Bengal, with a governor in Calcutta "close to your front door", Crewe saw obvious objections but suggested that they might be overcome by what he called "a wild-cat suggestion" or "the last word in statesmanship" - making Calcutta an Imperial enclave directly administered by the Viceroy, shifting the capital of Bengal to Dacca or elsewhere, and appointing Commissioners as in Bombay to administer the

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1. Hardinge to Bigge - 26 Jan. 1911; Ibid., Vol.104.

2. Crewe to Hardinge - 27 Jan. 1911; H.P., Vol.113, U.L.C.

3. Ibid.

Bengal tracts. Crewe realised that his suggestion would probably be opposed on grounds of increased expenditure, the interests of the legal profession, the attitude of the Bengalis to the plan to separate Calcutta, and the effect of the change on the Muslims. He also cited the advantages of the policy - "celebrating the Durbar and the King's visit by a dramatic act of policy",<sup>1</sup> and dissociating the Government of India from the Bengal Government which would be helpful since the actions of the latter were often attributed to the former. Crewe concluded:

"Nobody need be surprised if neither you nor I are able to face so great a change, but we must think the question over in the light of possible alternatives. I should be reluctant, in view of the King's strong feeling and of the general attraction of the idea, to abandon all hope of finding a way out until every path has been tried".<sup>1</sup>

Hardinge hastened to consult Sir John Jenkins, Baker, and Hare, and invited their views. He seemed to have been "filled with horror" at the idea of the Viceroy governing Calcutta as an enclave, and thought that if Bengal was to have a Governor, "the Government of India had better clear out and go elsewhere".<sup>2</sup>

Jenkins opposed Crewe's proposals. Like the original authors of the scheme, Jenkins considered that prior to partition, because of the vast area and population of Bengal, its administration had been rotten and "the outlying districts shockingly neglected"; the Government had only just managed to get along. Even with Commissioners for the tracts "the burden would be intolerably heavy for one Government". Chief Commissioners under a Governor of Bengal would be "an anomaly in the scheme of Indian Government".

As for the idea of Calcutta as the seat of the Viceroy as well as of the Governor (if Bengal was to be converted into a Presidency) Jenkins likened it to "two Kings in Brentford". He thought it unfortunate for the Government of India to be

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1. Ibid.

2. Hardinge to Jenkins and Baker - 13 Feb. 1911; H.P., Vol.113, U.L.C.

stationed in a city which was also the capital of a provincial Government. Both the Governments suffered as a consequence. It would be an advantage for the Government of India to leave Calcutta, where public opinion, both European and Indian was "the worst in India" - "the European conservative and prejudiced, the Indian flighty and running into extremes". Calcutta, in his opinion, exercised undue influence and a "bad influence" on the Government of India. He therefore suggested that there should be an Imperial capital just like the federal capitals in the United States, Canada, South Africa, and Australia.<sup>1</sup>

The removal of the Bengal Government from Calcutta which Crewe had suggested would, in Jenkins's view cause enormous difficulties. It would arouse greater resentment than was caused by the partition, as it was a part of Bengal drawing "most of its wealth" from the interior. To separate Calcutta from Bengal would be "another and a worse partition" and any suggestion of locating the capital in Dacca would raise a storm of protest.

Jenkins fervently hoped that the partition "would not be touched in any way", and observed:

"The agitation against it has died down almost completely. No one now expects any change. The vast majority of the people of Eastern Bengal, who were shamefully neglected under the old regime, were always in favour of the partition. They have now begun to enjoy and appreciate the benefits of it. They have been assured, over and over again, that the partition is immutable; and if it is now disturbed, they will justly accuse us of breach of faith, and confidence in our consistency and honesty of purpose will be shaken throughout India. The British Government has enough perfidies of this kind to its account without committing another".<sup>2</sup>

With a plea "to stave off any interference with the partition in any shape or form",<sup>3</sup> Jenkins concluded that the

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1. Encl. in Jenkins to Hardinge - 14 Feb. 1911; Ibid.

2. Ibid.

3. Jenkins to Hardinge - 14 Feb. 1911; Ibid.



country was in "peace and quiet" and that it would be "the greatest possible mistake to disturb the current of events which is now flowing strongly in our favour". "We do not want", he emphasised "fireworks, or grand coups, however, artfully designed to produce an effect".<sup>1</sup>

In a subsequent letter Jenkins was more explicit about the advantages which the partition had bestowed on the Muslims of the new province, and defended it on that ground. He observed that the Muslims had been staunch and loyal and had "suffered much at the hands of the Hindus" who owned the land and filled the Government services and professions, and that it would be "base now to leave in the lurch" those who were promised the permanence of the partition. The step would be a "Hindu triumph and a blow to the Mahommedans". The result of the union of the provinces would be to bring back the dominance of the Bengali politicians of Calcutta and make them supreme, and East Bengal and Assam would "fall into the background".<sup>2</sup>

The idea of modifying the partition filled Baker "with something like despair". Baker argued that even if it could be shown that a scheme different from the one adopted by Curzon might have been preferable, it would not establish the case for modification. He objected to it because of the heavy cost involved, and because the creation of Chief Commissionerships for Assam and Bihar would be an "extremely retrograde step" reverting back to the old system of indenting the loan of officers on Bengal and thus weakening the administration.<sup>3</sup> Baker thought that the agitation against the partition, which in his opinion was wholly "factitious" and "engineered" from the start, was dying out and if the Government could be firm "and leave the partition alone", it would disappear. The effect of Crewe's proposals on the Muhammadans as well as the

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1. Encl. to Jenkins to Hardinge - 14 Feb. 1911; Ibid.

2. Jenkins to Viceroy's Private Secretary - 16 Feb. 1911; Ibid.

3. The same arguments were adduced in 1905 against raising Bihar to a Chief Commissioner's province.

loyalists would be disastrous, making them feel that they had been "betrayed and abandoned", and they would be filled with "contempt and bitterness" against the Government. Baker thought that Crewe's suggestion of separating Calcutta might be the starting point of a fresh agitation. The clamant classes "gratified at the apparent reversal of the partition and the partial success of their agitation" "might temporarily hail the change, but they would soon find themselves disillusioned. Baker appreciated the King's desire to "make some striking announcement at the Durbar" but, like Jenkins, he cautioned Hardinge that the contemplated move was "fraught with disaster to the best interests" of the Indian Empire.<sup>1</sup>

In his letter Hare, the Lieutenant-Governor of East Bengal and Assam, upheld the partition, praising the progress and development made by the province in different spheres, and the strong feeling of provincial pride that was growing. The feeling of antagonism and apathy which the Bengalis had shown towards the administration in the beginning was subsiding, and some of the most avowed enemies of the partition were asking for the Government's co-operation and help<sup>2</sup> in various public enterprises. There was a growing desire to meet the educational needs of the province by the establishment of a separate University<sup>3</sup> and a strong feeling in favour of a High Court for the province.<sup>4</sup> Hare illustrated the growing popularity of the partition by citing the receptions and the welcome given to him in the various districts by those who had been the leaders of the agitation. He asserted

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1. Baker to Hardinge - 14 Feb. 1911; H.P., Vol. 113, U.L.C.

2. He cited Ananda Chandra Ray, one of the leaders of the agitation asking for Government's help.

3. The aspiration was expressed by a non-official Hindu member in the Lieutenant-Governor's Council.

4. He cited the District Judge of Dacca as stating that the junior members of the bar favoured the idea and one of them approached the judge to see if a memorial could be submitted to the Government on the subject.

that the partition was no longer unpopular "even with the Hindu bhadralog".

Like Jenkins, Hare also referred to the way in which the districts of the new province had been neglected before the partition. "They had been starved" observed Hare, "both in officers and in funds, and had been inadequately supervised". But after the partition, all had been changed and "with a stronger and better staff and with more adequate supervision the whole level of the work" had been "raised to the very great benefit of the people". He recorded that great progress had been made in completing a survey and record of rights. Various experiments were being conducted in the Agriculture Department. The Veterinary Department had a good record of work. The Co-operative Credit Societies, previously almost unknown, had made a great impact. The public health department had carried out successful programmes of anti-malarial measures. Schemes for improving the deplorable condition of the police administration in the districts had already been submitted. Communications which had been sadly neglected in the past were now fairly developed and the improvement of Chittagong port was receiving the constant attention of the Government. Progress in education had received great impetus during the last five years - the number of students at primary schools had increased within four years from five and a half lakhs to six and a half lakhs. In the educational field the province stood "on an altogether different footing to that which it occupied in 1905". A Government High School was maintained in each of the transferred districts. Fresh hostels were being provided for year by year. Collegiate education which before partition had been in a miserable condition had undergone a "complete revolution". Similarly steps had been taken to improve the education of girls.<sup>1</sup>

Before receiving Hare's letter, Hardinge had already

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1. Hare to Viceroy's Private Secretary - 20 Feb. 1911; H.P., Vol.113, U.L.C.

issued a preliminary communication to Crewe on 16 February 1911, opposing the proposal. He wrote:

"Feeling about the partition has almost entirely disappeared, and in a year or two nobody will think of it. What we want is quiet, and any tinkering with what was done six or seven years ago would raise a terrible storm. I shudder to think of it". 1

Now that Hardinge had received the opinion of the officers, on the question, and had studied the problem further himself, he rejected Crewe's idea. He defended Curzon's partition on the grounds that the original province was too large for administrative purposes. He noted that the Hindus had opposed the partition since they were in a minority in East Bengal and Assam but this was offset by the fact that they formed a majority in West Bengal. He did not pay much attention to the agitation, which he thought was dying out. Not only did he defend the partition in the interests of the Muslims, but he thought that a reversal would take the province back "to its former state of stagnation" since it would again become mainly dependent on the Bengal Government in Calcutta. Most of the other arguments which Hardinge used were those expressed by Jenkins, Baker and Hare, which have already been summarised.<sup>2</sup>

Hardinge sympathised with the King's idea of "setting right" what had been "represented to him as a wrong and a grievance" but observed:

"... I am quite sure that you will agree with me that an announcement of this kind which would alienate the Mahommedan population, and would even arouse the future resentment of a large section of the Bengalis, is not at all what the King or we desire.... And I am quite certain that the last thing His Majesty would wish to do would be to take any step that might embitter afresh feeling in this country". 3

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1. Hardinge to Crewe - 16 Feb. 1911; Ibid.
  2. Hardinge to Crewe - 22 Feb. 1911; Ibid.
  3. Ibid.

Hardinge urged Crewe to abandon the idea. "To give the slightest hope of any such solution", he continued, "would be simply to provoke a renewal of agitation, which I have said before is dying down and will disappear shortly from inanition".<sup>1</sup>

It is necessary to examine Hardinge's stand on the partition question closely, since in his book the responsibility for declaring the plan of revision to be impracticable is shifted, by implication, to his advisers.<sup>2</sup> While it is true that Hardinge had been in India for only a short time, and had to seek the advice of his officers and also that he acquiesced in their views and repeated the arguments which they had made against the scheme; nevertheless it was Hardinge who was the Viceroy and the chief administrator, and it was his responsibility to be fully informed. He had means to ascertain whether the counsel given to him was sound or not. He was able to bring all his diplomatic experience to bear on the task of discovering the truth, and could defer his judgement until such time as he was convinced of the proper course to take. Further, he was not bound by the advice tendered to him; he could have differed from it if he had <sup>had</sup> cause. He could have overruled the conclusions of his advisers and could have gone into the matter at greater depth. After all he had differed from the members of his Council and the officers of the Bengal Government on the question of the compromise in the Khulna Gang case, and he did what he thought best. Furthermore, he had Government reports on the course of the agitation, on the basis of which he could formulate his judgement. If they gave only a one-sided story, he had access to the summarised newspaper cuttings throwing light on the subject. In view of the importance of the proposal to revise the partition, especially when it had been initiated by his Sovereign, we are bound to conclude that he made use of all the available sources and pronounced his verdict after due

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1. Ibid.

2. Hardinge, op.cit., p.36.

enquiry and thorough examination. In the light of these factors the reason why he excused himself in his book from the opinion which he had conveyed to Crewe on 22 February 1911, can only be that he was attempting to justify his later decision to modify the partition.

With Hardinge's letter of 22 February 1911, the first phase of the partition discussions came to an end, yet the problem of making a dramatic announcement at the durbar remained, to puzzle the Viceroy, the King and the Secretary of State. It appears that meanwhile the King himself had abandoned his "ill-timed idea", as Morley, who acted as Secretary of State in Crewe's illness, called it. Morley saw the King some time at the end of March, 1911, and gathered that the King seemed "to have made up his mind that it would never do". He "quite saw the point" when Morley told him of the "unanswerable" objections which Hardinge had brought up against the proposal, especially Hardinge's pronouncement that it would "re-kindle the expiring ashes of the famous anti-partition agitation".<sup>1</sup>

Probably, Hardinge rejected the suggested modification in the hope that some other plan for the boon would be worked out by the Home Government. He had written to the King and was glad to know that the Sovereign was eager to obtain the gift of a crore of rupees from the British Government. Hardinge was assured by an Indian that if the British Government contributed the amount, the Chiefs in India would subscribe an equal sum. As a matter of fact Hardinge had been promised £10,000 as a personal contribution from this Indian,<sup>2</sup> who offered over and above this to collect another £100,000 from Bombay. Hardinge

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1. Morley to Hardinge - 24 March 1911; H.P., Vol.73. U.L.C. Also see Bigge to Hardinge - 17 Feb. 1911; Ibid., Vol.104. Bigge informed that the King realised the force of the arguments against raising Bengal to a Presidency and that the idea would be dropped.

2. Probably it was the Aga Khan as Hardinge discussed the issue with him.

hoped that the proposal would meet with the fullest support of the Conservative Party in Parliament but feared that the Extreme Socialists and the Labour Party would be opposed to it.<sup>1</sup>

The King did not see "the slightest chance of financial aid from home". The Treasury he wrote to Hardinge, "assert that India is much better off than England, no wonder that it is so, if we have to find money for all the new schemes" such as Insurance payment for sickness and unemployment etc.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless the King impressed upon the Prime Minister the importance of the grant, but Asquith did not hold out much hope, and questioned whether technical education would be of much use to the Indians.<sup>3</sup> Hardinge seemed disappointed at finding England unwilling to make a gift, in view of the "hare-brained schemes" which were before the Cabinet,<sup>4</sup> ~~and~~<sup>which</sup> were described by Curzon as "bribes to the labouring classes".<sup>5</sup> The Viceroy once again appealed to the King and wrote to him that the Indians resented the excise levy on cotton as a measure imposed in the interests of Lancashire and said that after the contemplated reduction of duty on tobacco for the benefit of Bristol, they would clamour that India was "run for the benefit of England". He therefore stressed that a generous boon would invalidate that particular objection.<sup>6</sup> The King was depressed at the "non-responsible and unsympathetic" attitude of his Government. Bigge remarked that "the Government and everyone else is at their wits' end to create some great boon or concession..." He communicated the constant reports reaching the King that

"mere Durbars, tamashas, a shower of honours, titles, and privileges on the Princes and nobility will avail nothing unless we touch the imagination of the mass of this growing, restless, enquiring, powerful, doubting city and

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1. Extract from Hardinge to Bigge - 26 Feb. 1911; H.C., Va 16, K.A.O.

2. King to Viceroy - 10 Feb. 1911; H.P., Vol.79, U.L.C.

3. Bigge to Hardinge - 24 Feb. 1911; H.C., Va 16, K.A.O.

4. Hardinge to Hewett - 1 March 1911; Ibid.

5. Curzon to Hardinge - 8 May 1911; Ibid., Va.17.

6. Viceroy to King - 2 March 1911; H.P., Vol.104, U.L.C.

urban population of India, and that it would be better that there should be no visit rather than that His Majesty should hold a Durbar without being able to announce some tangible boon to the people". 1

He also informed Hardinge that the Government was apprehensive about the cost of the King's visit, "disagreeable" questions were being put by the Labour M.P.'s and the whips were disinclined towards it.<sup>2</sup>

The grant for technical education was not the only boon Hardinge had asked for. He had recommended the opening of the King's Commission in the Native Army to the Princes and Chiefs, observing that by doing so "we should remove a slur on our good faith". Hardinge was sure that there would be opposition to the proposal, as the idea of giving high posts to the Indians had been previously opposed. In order to minimise the chances of such opposition Hardinge argued that if the Indian nobility were granted the Commission, many Indians would not rise beyond the rank of Captain as

"One cannot help noticing in this country how prematurely old people are and how very few really old men one sees. They seem to be quite

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1. Bigge to Hardinge - 10 March 1911; Ibid.
  2. Bigge to Hardinge - 7 April 1904; Ibid. Also see Ritchie to Hardinge - 21 April 1911; Ibid., Vol.73. Questions were put in the House of Commons by Sylvester Horne on 6 March, Ramsay MacDonald on 14 & 16 March, by Morrell, Keir Hardie and Page Croft on 24 March & by Keir Hardie and Morrell on 4 April 1911. 22, H.C.Debs., 5s, cols. 990-1, 2043-4, 2445-6; 23, H.C.Debs., 5s, cols. 1333-4 & 1977-8. The Sec. of State also informed the Govt. of India that the British Government would make no grant "towards the cost of entertaining His Majesty in India". See extract from Meston to Du Boulay - 20 April 1911. H.C., Va.17, K.A.O.. Inspired by the criticism of M.P.s in Parliament about the cost of the Durbar, the Dainik Chandrika wrote that the King was first the King of England and then the Emperor of India. The coronation would add to the glory of both the countries and therefore the cost should also be borne by both. See the Dainik Chandrika (Calcutta) 20 March 1911; B.N.N.R., No.13. Also see the Bharat Mitra - 13 May 1911; Ibid., No.20.



played up by the time they are 45, due probably to racial characteristics, premature marriages etc., Moreover, it is not in the nature of the young Princes to put up for an indefinite period with stern discipline.... After a few years in a Native regiment they will want to return to their homes and to spend a life of indulgence such as they have seen their fathers and relations spend before them". 1

Hardinge found the King keen about the subject<sup>2</sup> and constantly urged the home authorities for a decision before the Durbar.<sup>3</sup> However, he doubted that there would be a satisfactory answer in view of the communications which he had received earlier.

Hardinge's doubts were confirmed when Crewe reported disagreement, noting:

"Almost everybody seems afraid of the possibility that the silliest sub-altern and the stupidest private may not altogether approve of any concessions". 4

In a subsequent letter Crewe again informed Hardinge of the difficult situation and concluded:

"We run straight up against British prejudice in its most under-headed aspect". 5

As for the idea that free elementary education should be announced as a boon, Hardinge's earlier reaction to the suggestion had been unfavourable. He imputed ulterior motives

1. Hardinge to Crewe - 1 Jan. 1911; H.P., Vol.117, U.L.C.
2. Hardinge to Crewe - 9 March 1911; Ibid.
3. Hardinge to Crewe - 23 & 29 March 1911; Ibid., Hardinge to Bigge - 16 March 1911, and Hardinge to Ritchie - 18 May 1911; Ibid., Vol.104. In his letter of 29 March to Crewe, Hardinge reported that the All India Muslim League had also passed a resolution urging the Govt. to grant commissions to Indians in the army. Newspapers in Bengal supported the Muslim League Resolution. See the Bangavasi - 4 Feb. 1911; the Basumati - 4 Feb. 1911; & the Bir Bharat (Calcutta) - 5 Feb. 1911; B.N.N.R., No.6.
4. Crewe to Hardinge - 16 Aug. 1911; H.P., Vol.117, U.L.C.
5. Crewe to Hardinge - 7 Sept, 1911; Ibid.

to Gokhale in advocating it suspecting that he and his followers, wanted free elementary education not only for its benefits, but in order to bring the ryots into the groups of agitators, as an extension of education was bound to create more vocal criticism. Hardinge ascribed the apathy of Indian leaders to proposals for technical education to similar political motives, as the students trained in technical subjects would not swell the ranks of politicians, journalists and lawyers. He was in favour of neither free nor compulsory education.<sup>1</sup> However, as the prospects of any boon from England grew dim, Hardinge's approach to the question of education changed. Writing in June 1911 he felt it absolutely necessary to undertake an educational programme, and thought that free elementary education might be "a very handsome boon" for the Durbar.<sup>2</sup> Finally he submitted a scheme for education, prepared by Butler, for the Secretary of State's sanction.<sup>3</sup>

Hardinge explored other possibilities. When Clarke, Commerce Member, threw out a hint that revenue arrears might be remitted,<sup>4</sup> Hardinge asked Carlyle, the Finance Member to examine the question.<sup>5</sup> Carlyle's delayed reply was not very encouraging.<sup>6</sup> These enquiries were made towards the end of June and the beginning of July, when Hardinge was contemplating a different kind of boon.

It appears that Hardinge's desire was to announce a boon which was more dramatic than substantial. He hardly took into consideration as an alternative the cancelling of

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1. Hardinge to Crewe - 9 Feb. 1911; H.P., Vol.117, U.L.C. Crewe appeared to have agreed with Hardinge's views about Gokhale. See Crewe to Hardinge - 3 March 1911; Ibid.
  2. Hardinge to Crewe - 1 June 1911; Ibid. Also see Hardinge to Morley - 4 May 1911; Ibid. Crewe saw "a vast attraction in hitching the plan on to that of a Durbar boon". See Crewe to Hardinge - 15 June 1911; Ibid.
  3. Hardinge to Crewe - 29 June 1911; Ibid.
  4. Clarke to Hardinge - 18 June 1911; H.C., Va.18, K.A.O.
  5. Hardinge to Carlyle - 24 June 1911; Ibid.
  6. Carlyle to Du Boulay - 12 July 1911; Ibid.

particular taxes which the Indians had protested against for many years. The excise duty on cotton had long been a source of grievance. The salt tax had been criticised and Curzon had done his best to be able to announce its abolition at the Durbar held in his period. Hardinge was against the removal of excise in any form,<sup>1</sup> and yet he agreed to the reduction of tobacco duty. To Chirol he wrote that the import duty had reduced the smoking of a pernicious kind of cigarettes made by Messrs. Wills of Bristol, and that the Government were using "the shibboleth of free trade supply to protect Mr. Wills and to secure his Parliamentary support".<sup>2</sup> However, his protests to Crewe were milder.<sup>3</sup> When the issue was discussed in the Imperial Council, the case was presented in such a way as not to indicate that the reduction was due to the pressure from home.<sup>4</sup> Hardinge, however, could not stop adverse criticism in the newspapers which had discovered that the reduction of tobacco duty was for the sake of foreign merchants.<sup>5</sup> The Nayak commented that while the Government had decided to reduce the duty on tobacco, it did not bother to reduce the tax on kerosene oil, which affected the poor.<sup>6</sup> Hardinge did not find it practical to do away with the salt tax as this would have reduced the revenues of the Government by £3,000,000 per annum<sup>7</sup> but he did not support the motion moved in his Council to impose duty on foreign sugar.<sup>8</sup> The Hindi Bangavasi commented that the Government had refused to impose duty on foreign sugar on the plea that it would affect the poor, but the same consideration did

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1. Hardinge to Crewe - 19 Jan. 1911; H.P., Vol.117, U.L.C.

2. Hardinge to Chirol - 19 Feb. 1911; Ibid., Vol.92.

3. Hardinge to Crewe - 23 Feb. 1911; Ibid., Vol.117.

4. Hardinge to Morley - 16 March 1911; Ibid.

5. The Basumati - 18 March 1911; B.N.N.R., No.12.

6. The Nayak - 8 May 1911; Ibid., No.21. Also see the Bangavasi - 11 May 1911; Ibid.

7. Viceroy to King - 3 Oct. 1911; H.P., Vol.80, U.L.C.

8. The Dainik Chandrika - 20 March 1911; B.N.N.R., No.13. Also see the Hitavarta of 23 March 1911; & the Hitavadi of 24 March 1911; Ibid.

not move them at all to consider abolishing the duty on cloth as that would have affected the interests of English merchants.<sup>1</sup> When Minto urged a protectionist policy in the interests of India, Hardinge called it "one of the most wicked and mischievous statements...". In a vein of resentment Hardinge continued:

"Minto has done his utmost to make your and my position and that of my Council as difficult as possible in this country by throwing himself upon the side of the Opposition. Minto may, however, be quite certain that his Conservative friends will not be in a hurry to lose Lancashire seats by promoting protectionist propaganda in India".<sup>2</sup>

The Free Trader of 1911 however, talked differently in 1915 when in one of his minutes Hardinge recommended the abolition of the excise duty on cotton.<sup>3</sup>

The Viceroy who had opposed the abolition of the salt tax because of the loss of revenue involved, who had failed to extract a gift from England, and who had not protested effectively against the reduction in tobacco duty, involving a loss to Indian revenues, however, found it convenient to pay from the Indian revenues for a new Crown. Though there were objections to a "Napoleonic auto-coronation" of the King in India, it was thought necessary that the King should appear in a crown at the Durbar in order "to impress the people of India" if not the "more or less cultivated persons" of England with the theatrical side of the show.<sup>4</sup> The original idea was that the crown should be taken from England,<sup>5</sup> but the King's crown could not leave the country. Crewe wrote humourously to Hardinge:

"... your dacoits, though ingenious, would not have been likely to get at it; while if we do

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1. The Hindi Bangavasi - 27 March 1911; Ibid. Also see the Bangavasi of 25 March 1911; Ibid.
  2. Hardinge to Crewe - 8 June 1911; H.P., Vol.117, U.L.C.
  3. Hardinge's Minute of Oct. 1915; H.C., Va 34, K.A.O.
  4. Crewe to Hardinge - 13 Jan. 1911; H.P., Vol.117, U.L.C.
  5. Crewe to Hardinge - 27 Jan. 1911; Ibid.

by chance all go to the bottom in the Bay of Biscay, it might be hoped that even the loss of the Black Prince's ruby, which was in Henry V's helmet at Agincourt, and of the Stuart Sapphire, would not be regarded as the most untoward part of the business". 1

It was decided to have a new crown made by Gerrard, the jewelers of London, on the assumption that after use the crown would be broken up and the hiring charges of about four thousand pounds be paid to the jewellers. But it would be derogatory to break "such a priceless venerated emblem"; on the other hand it was difficult to find money for it, as neither the King nor the British Treasury were willing to affect a purchase costing about sixty thousand pounds.<sup>2</sup> Meanwhile Walter Lawrence whom Hardinge thought to be "excessively meddlesome and mischievous" had impressed the King that a suitable crown could be subscribed for by the Indian Nobles and Chiefs,<sup>3</sup> and had actually arranged this with the Maharajas of Burdwan and Tagore.<sup>4</sup> Bigge thought that "taking into consideration the splendid jewels possessed by the Native Chiefs, it would not do for the King's Crown to be inferior to the standard" to which the people of India were accustomed.<sup>5</sup> Crewe also approached Hardinge to see if it were possible "for some of the wealthier Chiefs to contribute either a sum or some diamonds, and for the big zemindars and the heads of the mercantile community to subscribe on behalf of British India". However, the idea was "not to be made public".<sup>6</sup> Hardinge discussed the "tiresome idea" with the members of his Council, who deprecated the proposal of a subscription as derogatory and politically unsound, and voted that it should

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1. Crewe to Hardinge - 21 June 1911; Ibid.
  2. Bigge to Viceroy - 27 March & 11 April 1911; Ibid., Vol.104.
  3. Hardinge to Morley - 29 March 1911; Ibid., Vol.117.
  4. Hardinge, op.cit., p.18.
  5. Bigge to Viceroy - 24 March 1911; Ibid., Vol.104.
  6. Crewe to Hardinge - 2 June 1911; H.P., Vol.117, U.L.C..  
Also see Sec. of State to Gov-Gen. - 20 June 1911;  
(Telegram), H.C., Va8, K.A.O. Scindia was to be asked to approach the chiefs for subscriptions.

be purchased from Indian revenues.<sup>1</sup> However, the financial authorities of the India Office grumbled at its being paid for by India and hoped that "the Treasury might help". In that case the bill had "to be lubricated through Parliament" and it might not have commended itself to the House of Commons. In the circumstances some members of the India Council thought that

"if the Crown came back here it might gradually disappear, like the Cheshire cat in the fairy story, and be forgotten, which would enable it to be broken up".<sup>2</sup>

Finally, the crown was paid for by the Government of India and added to the Royal Regalia.<sup>3</sup> It was only a dignified gesture for a good King who though very eager to do something befitting his office, was unable because of his limitations as a constitutional monarch, to goad his Government into making a suitable gift to India and had been forced to observe earlier:

"But would it not be possible to think of some other scheme which would benefit India without costing money to the British tax-payer"?<sup>4</sup>

Naturally Hardinge and his advisers kept on thinking about "some other scheme". Certain proposals had been made by Hardinge for a boon, but he was not sure whether they would be accepted by the India Office, or how well they would be received by the people of India.<sup>5</sup> The solution took a long time and was the product of Sir John Jenkins' mind.

On 18 June 1911, Hardinge wrote in his diary:

"Also received a bombshell from Jenkins". He wrote

1. Gov-Gen. - to Sec. of State - 23 June 1911; (Telegram), Ibid.

2. Crewe to Hardinge - 14 July 1911; H.P., Vol.117, U.L.C.

3. Hardinge, op.cit., p.18.

4. King to Viceroy - 7 April 1911; H.P., Vol.104, U.L.C.

5. For instance Clarke was sceptical about the advantage of elementary education. In Clarke's opinion it would not please the masses. See Clarke to Hardinge - 30 June 1911; H.C., Va.18, K.A.O. Also see Clarke to Hardinge - 21 July 1911; Ibid.

Received a letter from Crewe urging the raising of subscriptions for the purchase of the Crown. A very tiresome idea.

Also received a bomb shell from Jenkins saying ~~the bomb shell was a very big idea~~ ~~to talk to Jenkins tomorrow.~~ A big idea will talk to Jenkins tomorrow.

A page from Hardinge's diary wherein he described Jenkins' idea of the modification of partition as "a bombshell".

about two more lines and scribbled them in such a way that they could not be read. The last sentence ended: "A big idea. Will talk to Jenkins tomorrow".<sup>1</sup> Hardinge talked with Jenkins on 19 June 1911. His diary contains:

"Saw Jenkins and intend to take up his idea".<sup>2</sup>

The relations between Jenkins and Hardinge were not very cordial, though in his book Hardinge wrote that he always got on extremely well with Jenkins.<sup>3</sup> Hardinge's diary reveals a different story. On 16 December 1910, he recorded:

"Jenkins is a very masterful man, very honest & straightforward but he resents opposition. All the other members of Council are quite easy to manage".<sup>4</sup>

When the question of house searches by the police in Bengal was discussed in the Viceroy's Council, Hardinge encountered the same opposition, and wrote:

"Jenkins & Carlyle dissented. They are always in opposition. The rest of the Council entirely agreed".<sup>5</sup>

Hardinge decided to bring Jenkins into line<sup>6</sup> and on 23 May 1911 sent for him. He "pitched into him well" for his "disloyal" attitude. Hardinge said that he felt Jenkins' minutes were disagreeable and reminded him of the climax when a minute written by Jenkins had been "printed & disseminated" throughout the Home Department of the Government of India. In his minute Jenkins, according to Hardinge's account, had written that:

"as far as he knew the Govt. had no policy & that he would like to know what it was".

Hardinge resented such a statement from his Home Member implying "a policy of drift" and containing "a serious reflection" upon Hardinge and his Government. Jenkins' attitude, thought Hardinge "was open to criticism and his pen still worse".<sup>7</sup>

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1. Hardinge's diary - 18 June 1911; Ibid., Vp2.

2. Hardinge's diary - 19 June 1911; Ibid.

3. Hardinge, op.cit., p.16.

4. Hardinge's diary - 16 Dec. 1910; H.C., Vp2. K.A.O.

5. Ibid., 24 Feb. 1911.

6. Ibid., 5 May 1911.

7. Ibid., 23 May 1911.



Jenkins was "deeply grieved" for, as he wrote to the Viceroy,

"it was the first time in my service that such things had been said to me, and I was so much shocked, and taken by surprise, that I hardly knew what to say".<sup>1</sup>

In this letter Jenkins tried to absolve himself of "any factious opposition" or any "intention to cause annoyance" to his Chief. He thought that if instead of "persuading and convincing" the Government of India by what he took to be the right course of action, he had caused annoyance, then "I have bungled my business and so much the worse for me". He was incapable of "proceeding by the way of suggestion or innuendo" and could not promise to try to use a "lighter touch". He concluded by assuring Hardinge of his "loyal support and co-operation in any policy".<sup>2</sup> Hardinge sent a friendly reply, pointing out that he did not mind a difference of opinion but observed: "in pressing your views you sometimes write in your minutes more than you mean".<sup>3</sup> From now onwards, as a result of what Hardinge called "the blowing up" he gave to Jenkins, Hardinge found his Home Member "in quite an amiable mood".<sup>4</sup>

The question of timing in history - why a particular incident took place when it did - often remains unanswered. Sometimes it is the real clue to a problem. Here it is significant to note that a member of the Viceroy's Council whose attitude had been described by the Viceroy as "disloyal" and "always in opposition", and who had previously opposed any modification of the partition in any way now offered a solution to the problem of the boon. Within less than a month after Hardinge's reprimand, Jenkins suggested a "revision of the partition of Bengal", of which the essential point was "the creation of an Imperial Capital at Delhi".<sup>5</sup> This was the idea

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1. Jenkins to Hardinge - 25 May 1911; H.P., Vol.81, U.L.C.

2. Ibid.

3. Hardinge to Jenkins - 26 May 1911; Ibid.

4. Hardinge's diary - 26 May 1911; H.C., Vp2, K.A.O.

5. Jenkins to Hardinge - 17 June 1911. H.P., Vol.113, U.L.C.

which Hardinge in his diary called "a bombshell".<sup>1</sup>

Jenkins thought that the effect of his scheme would be "magical" and that "it would touch the imagination of the masses of the people indescribably".<sup>2</sup> Curiously enough, the idea of the boon was also, to use Hardinge's words, to give something which would "appeal to the imagination and impressionability of the Indian people".<sup>3</sup> Thus the modification of the partition accompanied by the shifting of the capital was to achieve what might have been achieved by a gift for the encouragement of technical education - an idea which Hardinge had described as "a very cheap method of buying loyalty and peace".<sup>4</sup>

Hardinge was surprised at Jenkins' ingenious suggestion, for as recently as February 1911, Jenkins had provided him with "powder and shot" to refute the King's proposal. Naturally, the Viceroy's position was as untenable as of Jenkins' in view of their earlier stand. Further Hardinge was not hopeful about the reaction of the Muslims of Eastern Bengal, who had been constantly assured of the permanence of the partition. He questioned whether the shifting of the capital to Delhi - once the seat of Muslim rulers - "would be a sufficient and satisfactory panacea to them for the loss of their position of predominance".<sup>5</sup> What Hardinge was going to assert in the despatch on the proposals for modification, he now denied by stating that the choice of Delhi as the seat of the Government of India "would be a purely sentimental satisfaction" to the Muslims of East Bengal. He agreed that it would be advantageous to shift the capital from Calcutta but prophetically doubted "if the Bengalis would in the end be satisfied",<sup>6</sup> though in his despatch he was to write that it would satisfy all classes

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1. See above, p. 257.

2. Jenkins to Hardinge - 17 June 1911; op.cit.

3. See above, p. 226.

4. Ibid.

5. Hardinge to Jenkins - 18 June 1911; H.P., Vol. 113, U.L.C.

6. Ibid.

of people. On 19 June 1911, Hardinge called Jenkins to discuss the issue and decided to "take up his idea".<sup>1</sup>

On 20 June 1911, Hardinge drew up a note formulating the main points of the scheme. It may be noted that Jenkins' memorandum, accompanying his letter of 17 June 1911, which must have contained the real issues, has disappeared. Why did not Hardinge preserve it? Possibly to cover up the fact that the plan was conceived of opportunism and that it came under consideration simply because the Government had failed to get a boon.

Hardinge made a big somersault. It comes fairly easily to some types of human nature to reverse a particular stand completely and find arguments in favour of an idea that one had previously contested, disputed and rejected. This is what Hardinge did now in his attitude to the partition. Throughout his correspondence, Hardinge had attributed the dacoities and murders in the two Bengals to administrative weakness; now he ascribed them to the partition.<sup>2</sup> He had contended, not long before, that "Feeling about the partition has almost entirely disappeared";<sup>3</sup> now he wrote that "feeling amongst the Bengalis in both provinces ... is as strong as ever".<sup>4</sup> Previously Hardinge had called the agitation against the partition factitious, based on an apprehension of the loss of influence to the Bengalis, and had thought that they were "not a penny worse".<sup>5</sup> Now he asserted that as a result of the partition the Bengalis "can never have in either province that influence to which they consider themselves entitled by reason of their

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1. Hardinge's diary - 19 June 1911; H.C., Vp2, K.A.O.

2. Hardinge's Note - 20 June 1911; H.P., Vol.113, U.L.C.

3. See above, p.247.

4. Hardinge's Note - 20 June 1911; op.cit.

5. Hardinge to Crewe - 22 Feb. 1911; H.P., Vol.113. U.L.C.

numbers, wealth and education".<sup>1</sup> On 18 June 1911, he wrote that the shifting of the capital to Delhi would be a "purely sentimental satisfaction"<sup>2</sup> to the Muslims, but within two days he adopted the revised view that

"The Mahommedans would be intensely gratified by the ancient capital of the Moghuls again becoming the seat of Empire".<sup>3</sup>

Likewise, two days earlier he had doubted "whether the Bengalis would in the end be satisfied" if the capital was shifted; now he commented:

"The Bengalis will gladly assent to the removal of the Government of India from Calcutta, in exchange for the restoration of their Province, with a Governor in Council...".<sup>4</sup>

Previously Hardinge had argued that to give any hope of a modification of the partition would invite a renewal of the agitation;<sup>5</sup> now he reasoned that there was a feeling amongst the Indians that the King would undo the partition, and that if these expectations were not realised there would be trouble in future.<sup>6</sup>

In order to justify the plan Hardinge pointed out that there were constant rumours that partition would be undone by the King. He also stated that a memorial was being prepared to be presented to the King to stop the slaughter of cows by the Muslims. A refusal to accept the memorial and failure to cancel the partition at the Durbar, accompanied by the "absence of

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1. Hardinge's Note - 20 June 1911; op.cit. Hardinge argued that the Bengalis as a result of the partition were in a minority in the Legislative Councils of both provinces. Jenkins had however told Hardinge in February that though the Muslim majority would be permanent in Eastern Bengal and Assam, the balance might be redressed in Western Bengal in favour of the Bengalis by the next election. See Jenkins to Viceroy's Private Secretary - 16 Feb. 1911; Ibid.

2. See above, p. 260.

3. Hardinge's Note - 20 June 1911; op.cit.

4. Ibid.

5. See above, p. 248.

6. Hardinge's Note - 20 June 1911; op.cit.

any large boon to satisfy the general expectations", he argued, would convince a certain section of Indian opinion that the King had "no sovereign powers", and therefore the visit would be a disappointment and would give rise to revolutionary crime.<sup>1</sup>

As regards the rumours, they were but a natural product of the state of expectancy engendered by the impending royal visit. But partition was not the only subject of rumours. A perusal of the Bengal Native Newspapers Reports would show that there were rumours about the release of political prisoners,<sup>2</sup> there were expectations of doing away with what the Bharat Mitra called the "disgraceful and scandalous" payment of the India Office establishment from the Indian revenues,<sup>3</sup> and there were hopes of the remission of certain taxes,<sup>4</sup> of the doing away of the Seditious Meetings Act and the Explosives Act,<sup>5</sup> of the acceptance of the old Congress demand for holding Civil Service Examinations simultaneously in India and England and of the repeal of excise duty on cotton, of the prohibition of cow slaughter<sup>6</sup> and of the modification of the partition.<sup>7</sup> As for the rumour about the partition, Hardinge was partly to blame as it was after his compromise over the Khulna Gang case that these expectations were aroused though they were not altogether absent before. The Hitavadi of 11 August 1911,

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1. Hardinge's Note - 20 June 1911; op.cit.
  2. The Joshar (Jessore) - 11 Feb. 1911; B.N.N.R., No.7.
  3. The Bharat Mitra - 1 April 1911; Ibid., No.14.
  4. The Amrita Bazar Patrika - 6 April 1911; Ibid., No.15.
  5. Ibid., 11 July 1911; No.29.
  6. The Basumati - 20 May 1911; B.N.N.R., No.21, the Pallivasi (Kalna) - 31 May 1911; Ibid., No.24; & the Hitavadi - 8 Sept. 1911; Ibid., No.37.
  7. For rumours before the Khulna Gang case compromise see the Nayak - 3 Feb. 1911; Ibid., No.6; the Bengalee - 28 Feb. 1911; the Samay - 10 March 1911; & the Basumati - 11 March 1911; B.N.N.R., No.11. After the Khulna Gang case was compromised, the rumours gained ground. See the Nayak - 12 April 1911; the Indian Empire - 19 April 1911; Ibid., No.15. the Bangavasi - 29 April 1911; Ibid., No. 16. Also see the Bengalee - 28 April, 2 June, 2 & 4 Aug. 1911, & the Amrita Bazar Patrika of 4 Aug. 1911; B.N.N.R., No.32.

remarked that the idea about the annulment of the partition gained ground because of the conciliatory policy of the Government and that the fact that the Government did not contradict the rumour seemed to have confirmed that impression.<sup>1</sup> Yet another factor that might have given rise to these rumours was Hardinge's conversation with Surendra Nath Banerjea and his agreeing to consider a memorial against the partition.<sup>2</sup> We do not know what transpired between Hardinge and Banerjea, as the accounts are silent. However, the East Bengal and Assam Government reported on 3 May 1911, that rumours were afloat that Banerjea had obtained "a personal promise" from Hardinge that the partition would be undone.<sup>3</sup> On 28 October 1911, C. Bayley, who succeeded Hare as the Lieutenant-Governor of East Bengal and Assam also wrote to Hardinge that it was rumoured that Banerjea "had received a hint from you that the partition would be modified".<sup>4</sup>

Thus the arguments put forward by Hardinge for undoing partition were mere excuses to strengthen his case. Neither the rejection of the anti-cow-killing memorial nor the rumours about the annulment could justify doing away with the partition. It was an established practice of the British not to interfere with the religious performances of any community and the rejection of the memorial was not unexpected. After Curzon's resignation, there were not only rumours but strong expectations amongst the Bengalis that a Liberal Government would undo the partition. Morley still upheld the partition.

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1. The Hitavadi - 11 Aug. 1911; Ibid., No.33.

2. Hardinge's Note - 20 June 1911; H.P., Vol.113, U.L.C. In March 1911 when the Govt. learnt that Banerjea was organising a deputation, he was informed that the Viceroy would not receive such a deputation (See Du Boulay to Surendra Nath Banerjea - 17 March 1911, H.P., Vol.81, U.L.C.) To this Banerjea replied that nothing would be done "contrary to the terms of conversation" he had with Hardinge. (See Banerjea to Du Boulay - 18 March 1911; Ibid.)

3. Le Mesurier to Earlie - 3 May 1911; I.H.Pol.Procs., (11 May 1911), D.O. No.692 N.120-10, Crewe Papers, The Kings Durbar Announcement Volume, U.L.C.

4. Bayley to Hardinge - 28 Oct. 1911; H.P., Vol.81, U.L.C.

Similarly Hardinge's idea of impressing the Indians with the show of "sovereign powers" by nullifying the partition constituted a misuse of the authority of the Sovereign who as a matter of fact did not have any such powers. The Muhammadi questioned if the King had the power to do so at all.<sup>1</sup> The annulment of the partition was embarked upon "in the absence of any large boon", which Hardinge was unwilling to admit or which he admitted only reluctantly.

Hardinge's proposals, which ruled out "a reversion to the status quo ante" were intended to:- "(i) provide convenient administrative units; (ii) satisfy the Bengalis; (iii) conciliate Mahommedan sentiment; and (iv) be so clearly based upon broad grounds of political and administrative expediency as to negate any presumption that it has been exacted by clamour and agitation".<sup>2</sup> To achieve this he recommended: the restoration of the Chief Commissionership of Assam; the creation of a Lieutenant-Governorship of Bihar, Orissa and Chota Nagpur with a Legislative Council; the constitution of Bengali speaking Divisions of Burdwan, Presidency, Rajshahi, Dacca and Chittagong into a Presidency with a Governor in Council; and making Delhi as the Imperial Capital.<sup>3</sup> "Apart from the question of trying to appease Bengal by a modification of the partition" Hardinge emphasized the need of shifting the capital which he thought "should be done now or never".<sup>4</sup>

Hardinge's diary from 19 June 1911 onwards does not mention the steps or discussions about the scheme. There are entries concerning his going to theatres, watching polo, and attending dinners and dances and about the weather, but not about the scheme, except that, on 26 June 1911, Hardinge had an interview with Butler and Carlyle and discussed the plan with them.<sup>5</sup>

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1. The Muhammadi (Calcutta) - 19 May 1911; B.N.N.R., No.21.

2. Hardinge's Note - 20 June 1911; op.cit.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Hardinge's diary - 26 June 1911; H.C., Vp2, K.A.O.

Within about two weeks Hardinge was able to get the views of all the members of his Council on a project about which it had taken more than two years for Curzon to reach a decision. Once the members saw their Chief advocating the plan, all but two of them agreed with him. Sir Guy Fleetwood Wilson a member of Viceroy's Council, took credit in pointing out that ever since 1909 he was convinced of the necessity of undoing the partition but did not have the courage to tell this to Minto, though he had talked to Kitchener about it. However, he was opposed to the creation of a Lieutenant-Governorship for Bihar and Orissa and suggested the transfer of Orissa to Madras and <sup>-the raising</sup> of Bihar <sup>and</sup> to Bengal, <sup>to a Governorship</sup> or the addition of Bihar to the Central Provinces.<sup>1</sup> O'M. Creagh, the Commander-in-Chief, confined his remarks to the advantages of shifting the capital to Delhi, which he called a "great act of statesmanship".<sup>2</sup> Jenkins supported what was in fact his own plan by stating that "until we get rid of the partition ulcer, we shall have no peace in Bengal". Curiously enough, while writing that he should always have been himself "willing to consider proposals for a revision",<sup>3</sup> Jenkins forgot that he had recently opposed such a revision. Syed Ali Imam, a Muslim Member of the Viceroy's Council, hailing from Bihar, and knowing the "feelings and sentiments of the people of that province" welcomed the idea of raising Bihar and Orissa to a Lieutenant-Governor's province. He criticised Curzon's partition as a "rude shock to the political possibilities of the Bengalis (Hindus)"; and declared that "Lord Curzon's knife had cut them to the quick...". He thought that whereas the Bengali before the partition "was supreme and played with the fortunes of the Beharis, Oryas and the Mahommedans of East Bengal", the redistribution secured to him "unmeasured strength". He pleaded for adjusting the relative claims of communities

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1. Wilson's Note - 22 June 1911; H.P., Vol.113, U.L.C.

2. O'm Creagh's Note - 24 June 1911; Ibid.

3. Jenkins' Note - 24 June 1911; Ibid.



not on the basis of political expediency alone but "the higher rights of justice". Ali Imam thought that the scheme would

"secure efficiency, soothe the Bengali, satisfy the Behari, strengthen Mahomedan loyalty, and gratify the martial races of India who detest Calcutta domination". 1

Carlyle's and Butler's views were somewhat different from those of their other colleagues. Carlyle questioned the advisability of adopting the measure which he claimed would be "unconstitutional" because non-official opinion was not consulted. He was not sure as to the effect of the change and thought that

"nothing could be more unfortunate than to allow the King to proclaim as a boon anything likely to be a matter of bitter controversy. We cannot risk a leap in the dark. The matter of vital importance is that we should do nothing in this matter which could lead Mahomedans to believe, even wrongly to believe, that their interests were being sacrificed to Bengali clamour".

Referring to the opposition to Curzon's partition, he continued:

"At the root of the bitterness lies the fact that the question is one between justice to Mahomedans and toleration of the continuance in Eastern Bengal of Hindu supremacy unchallenged for many years before the partition.... The Mahomedans had settled down to acquiescence in their subjection to the government of my countrymen, but they are not prepared to accept in its place government by Hindus, and for the time being this has caused a material change for the worse in Hindu-Mahomedan relations".

Carlyle questioned as to how the Muslims of Eastern Bengal would be saved from the domination of the Hindus by a mere transfer of the Capital, and argued that they were entitled to "some better security". He was also apprehensive about the attitude of the Bengalis towards the shifting of the capital and forecast:

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1. Ali Imam's Note - 1 July 1911; Ibid.

"It is possible they might for the moment lose sight of everything else in the joy of a modified partition, but will the satisfaction be lasting?"

Once again he emphasised that the Muslims of Eastern Bengal should not be betrayed for

"so far as we admit Indians into partnership, we will see to it that Mahommedans have their full share".

Carlyle, however, did not press the point and agreed with the details of the project.<sup>1</sup>

Butler, the Education Member, was opposed to "any re-opening of the partition on its merits". He ascribed the bad state of affairs in Bengal to causes other than the partition and observed that the agitation against it had lost its force. Butler defended the partition for the new life it had given to the province, which in his opinion had been previously starved.<sup>2</sup> He was attracted by the idea of the transfer of the capital but like Carlyle he thought that the Muslims of East Bengal would not be appeased by it. Butler was prepared to support the project if the change of the capital and the erection of a strong frontier province of Assam were the main objects of the Government. Even then he recommended a semi-independent Commissioner, a separate High Court or Chief Court and a University at Dacca. With an eye to protecting his own interests and that of his brethren of the I.C.S., he proposed that the post of Governor should not be closed to the I.C.S.<sup>3</sup>

Hardinge was happy to have received what he called the "general support" to the proposal from the members of his Council and decided to get in touch with the Secretary of State. As for consulting the people, Hardinge's idea was to take necessary measures in this connection only after the announcement had been made by the King.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Carlyle's Note - 29 June 1911; Ibid.

2. Butler's Note - 30 June 1911; Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Hardinge to Butler - 29 June 1911; Ibid.

But the paradox of Hardinge's position was that he had all along opposed any modification of the partition. In his book he wrote that, after his first rejection of the scheme in February 1911, he had been thinking on the lines finally adopted and that Jenkins memorandum caused his views "to materialize into a definite policy".<sup>1</sup> But his views about the partition, as revealed in his correspondence were altogether different from what he set forth in print. From February 1911 until 15 June 1911 - two days before he received Jenkins' letter and memorandum, Hardinge had been consistently opposing any reversal of the partition. On 2 March 1911, Hardinge sent to Crewe a copy of a letter from a Hindu leader from East Bengal in support of maintaining the partition. The letter ran:-

"They say the partition is a mistake. If it is a mistake to make a province self-contained - to provide for its expansion - to pay infinitely greater attention to local needs and to the comforts of the people - then I say that the mistake deserves to be perpetuated.

You have scarcely any idea with which the Western Bengal people look down upon the East Bengal people - the "Bangals". The West Bengal people loftily aver that we have no culture, no literature, - a reproach that we feel keenly. It will be our aim to show that we possess both, and that we can do without them - which is more than they can do judging by their present activities. It is better that we should recognise open enemies than be bullied to a sense of false security by false professions of friendship.

I trust that Government will not give in to interested agitation at the late hour when new hopes and aspirations have come into our life and throw us to the wolves". 2

When O'Donnell asked Hardinge to undo the partition, Hardinge quoted the above letter and wrote that undoing of the partition would be a treachery to Eastern Bengal. He concluded:

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1. Hardinge, op.cit., pp.36-7.

2. Encl. in Hardinge to Crewe - 2 March 1911; H.P., Vol.117, U.L.C. The letter was sent by Hare to Hardinge without the name of the writer.

"Things have changed and are changing rapidly, and the clock cannot be set back in Eastern Bengal for the sake of a few Bengali agitators of Calcutta". 1

This he wrote more than two months after rejecting the first suggestion for modification. When Hardinge heard that Bhupendra Nath Basu was on his way to England, he warned Crewe on 4 May 1911, not to listen to him apprehending that Basu might open the partition issue. To give support to his contention, he told Crewe that Basu had never mentioned the subject to him during several conversations that he had had with him. Further Hardinge emphasised:

"nor was the word partition mentioned once during the whole Legislative Session. I therefore, regard the question as practically dead...." 2

Some time in June 1911, Hardinge received a memorial for the modification of the partition. Unlike the previous memorials which had asserted the wrong done to the Bengali community (Hindus and Muslims) and which had been garbed on the grievances of the Bengali "nation", the present memorial spoke of the harm done by the partition to the "Bengali-speaking Hindu population" and asked for the revocation of the evil deed.<sup>3</sup>

On 15 June 1911, (just three days before he accepted Jenkins' proposals), Hardinge dismissed the request made in the memorial and wrote to Crewe:

"It [the memorial] repeats all the old arguments. There is absolutely no doubt that the partition was carried out on wrong lines, but so much money has been spent on the new province, which is

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1. Hardinge to O'Donnell - 27 April 1911; H.P., Vol. 92, U.L.C.
  2. Hardinge to Crewe - 4 May 1911; Ibid., Vol. 117.
  3. Memorial from the inhabitants of East Bengal and West Bengal to Hardinge (n.d.) Crewe Papers. The memorial has already been referred to at pp. 2. It may be noted that unlike the previous memorials against partition which were not treated confidentially, Hardinge marked it as "Strongly Confidential".

rapidly settling down to its provincial existence, that I shudder at the thought of any attempt to produce administrative chaos and to expose us to the charge of indecision of purpose and of treachery to the Mahomedans". 1

Thus Hardinge on 15 June 1911, had once again disposed of the modification plan, while from 18 June 1911, onwards he ceased to "shudder" at the thought of being charged with "indecision and of treachery to Mahomedans", and began to adopt a new formula. Meanwhile he received a letter from Crewe in reply to his of 22 February 1911, wherein Hardinge had discarded the suggestion of the King - the reply having been delayed on account of Crewe's illness. Crewe in his letter of 21 June 1911, accepted Hardinge's earlier arguments for rejecting the idea of modification and said he would not trouble Hardinge "with further excursions on the subject". Crewe observed:

"If I still think that I was not such a d--d fool to make the suggestion as I should almost universally be considered to be, this is probably due to customary pride in paternity of a plan". 2

Crewe hardly knew that this "paternity" would now be assumed by Hardinge who having sent his letter of 15 June and having received a direction from Crewe himself to close the chapter, and now finding himself in an uncomfortable position, telegraphically informed Crewe:

"Do not be very surprised, but my views have changed, and I sent you by last mail a secret letter containing new proposals". 3

On 6 July 1911, Hardinge communicated to Crewe the gist of his new proposals contrary to his statement of 15 June

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1. Hardinge to Crewe - 15 June 1911; H.P., Vol.117, U.L.C.. The letter was not included in the printed volume 113 which contains the correspondence on the modification.
  2. Crewe to Hardinge - 21 June 1911; Crewe Papers, Vol.1, U.L.C. The letter is also available in H.P., Vol.113 but it is dated 15 June 1911.
  3. Gov-Gen. to Sec. of State - 10 July 1911; (Telegram), H.P., Vol.113, U.L.C.

1911. He said that it was necessary to carry out the new plan in order to have peace in the two Bengals.<sup>1</sup> A week later Hardinge supplied Crewe with the details and the reasons for embarking upon the scheme. Referring to Curzon's scheme, Hardinge pointed out that

"while the urgent need for giving relief to the over-burdened province of Bengal was the main reason of the proposals for partition, the desire to aim a blow at the Bengalis overcame other considerations in giving effect to that laudable object".<sup>2</sup>

He thought that the advantages to the Muslims in the original scheme of 1905 were only "incidental" and "an afterthought". Hardinge argued that the partition had not justified itself by the results; though much good had been done in the new province, especially for the benefit of the Muslims, "the political power of the Bengalis has not been broken". On the other hand they had become "more powerful and certainly more troublesome". Besides, he wrote that

"a grave injustice has been done to the Bengalis, seeing that they are in a minority in both provinces, and this injustice should certainly be rectified. The Bengalis are born agitators, and there is no doubt whatsoever that they will never cease to agitate until they have obtained a modification of the partition".<sup>3</sup>

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1. Hardinge to Crewe - 6 July 1911; Ibid.

2. Ibid., 13 July 1911.

3. Ibid. The despatch on the administrative changes also specified the fact that after the partition, the Bengalis found themselves in a minority in the Legislative Councils of the two Bengals "being outnumbered in the one by Beharis and Oriyas, and in the other by the Mahomedans of Eastern Bengal and the inhabitants of Assam". (See Gov-Gen. to Sec. of State - Aug. 1911; H.P., Vol.113, para.19). The word Bengali as used in the despatch denoted the Bengali-speaking Hindu population. The expression was adopted to show the Bengali-speaking Hindu representatives in the Councils in a minority, since a comparison between the Hindu and Muslim representatives would have established nineteen Hindus against seven Muslims in the Bengal Council and thirteen Hindus against eight Muslim in E.B. & A. Council (in both

footnote 3 continued from previous page

cases the figures include elected, nominated official & non-official members). If on the other hand, a distinction would have been made between the Bengali-speaking and the non-Bengali-speaking representatives (Hindus and Muslims included), it would have shown a minority of the Bengali-speaking representatives in Bengal (fourteen non-Bengalis against twelve Bengalis), but would have established a majority of not less than nine Bengali-speaking representatives in E.B. & A. (see the India Office List, 1911, pp.45, & 55). This, however, would not have suited the Government's contention. Hence the Bengali-speaking Hindu representatives in the Bengal Council were compared against the Muslims, Biharis and Oriyas put together & against the Bengali-speaking Muslims, & the Assamese (both Muslims and Hindus) in E.B. & A. Carlyle held that even according to the convenient definition of the Government, the Bengali-speaking Hindus were in a majority in the E.B. & A. Council. (See Carlyle's Note - 16 July 1911; H.P., Vol.113, U.L.C.) Carlyle even thought that the Bengalis were in a majority in both the Councils. Ali Imam, however, contested Carlyle's figures and showed that in Bengal Council, the Bengalis were in a minority. His note was silent about the figures in E.B. & A. Council probably because it contained a majority of Bengali Hindus. (See Ali Imam's Note - 18 July 1911; Ibid).

Oddly enough, Hardinge later contradicted himself as to his statement about the Bengalis being in a minority in the Bengal Council. While refusing assent to the Orissa Tenancy Law and Mining Law, he wrote: "Knowing that the Legislative Council of Bengal is composed chiefly of Bengalis, and the Beharis and Ooryas are in a very small minority, I could not help feeling that there was something wrong about the Bill...." See Hardinge to Crewe - 28 March 1912; H.P., Vol.118, U.L.C.

At the same time, Hardinge seemed a little concerned as to the effect of his scheme upon the Muslims of Eastern Bengal and Assam. To propitiate them, he proposed to constitute the boundaries of the proposed province in such a way that the Muslims had either equality or small superiority in numbers over the Hindus. He recognised that to the Muslims the loss of their "overwhelming majority in Eastern Bengal would be a severe blow but he offered a cynical argument that they would be soothed by the transfer of the capital to Delhi.<sup>1</sup>

On 26 July 1911, Hardinge received Crewe's approval of the scheme on general lines.<sup>2</sup> Crewe was reluctant to put the plan formally before his Council but intended to "mention it privately to them", in his room in order to bring them round.<sup>3</sup> Crewe even thought to do away with the approval of his Council but was afraid of "straining the law" and exposing the Government to severe criticism. He therefore decided to sound three or four members and then call the entire Council and get their approval by reading out the despatch. He asked Hardinge to send him a despatch by 1 October with a view to its entire publication and instructed that the same be sent to him personally as if it were a private letter.<sup>4</sup>

On 10 August 1911, Crewe spoke to King and Bigge and impressed upon them the need of complete secrecy.<sup>5</sup> The King was delighted "both as regards Delhi and Bengal, having long wished to deal with the latter", and was particularly anxious

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1. Hardinge to Crewe - 13 July 1911; H.P., Vol.113; U.L.C.

2. Hardinge's diary - 26 July 1911; H.C., Vp2, K.A.O.

3. Sec. of State to Gov-Gen. - 28 July 1911; H.P., Vol.113, U.L.C.

4. Sec. of State to Gov-Gen. - 7 Aug. 1911; (Telegram), Ibid. Crewe decided to inform the Cabinet "not before I take ship for Bombay". See Sec. of State to Gov-Gen. - 15 Aug. 1911; Ibid.

5. Sec. of State to Gov-Gen.- 11 Aug. 1911; Ibid. Elaborate precautions were taken to maintain secrecy. Hardinge copied his letters himself and got the minutes of the members of his Council typed by the nurse of his daughter. A special cypher was set up for the telegrams. (See Gov-Gen. - to Sec. of State - 10 & 13 July & 3 Aug. 1911; & Sec. of State to Gov-Gen. - 4 Aug. 1911; Ibid.)



to make the announcement with his own voice.<sup>1</sup> Some time later Crewe spoke to Asquith, the Prime Minister, and Morley, both of whom were reported to have been deeply impressed and favourable. Crewe was particularly gratified at Morley's adhesion whom he thought "apt to tear his hair and scatter ashes when a novel scheme is afoot".<sup>2</sup>

The original despatch on the scheme as prepared by Hardinge had to be slightly changed in view of Crewe's instructions.<sup>3</sup> It contained "unflattering remarks" about the Bengalis and portrayed the feeling of other provinces towards Bengal:

"For no great historical traditions attach to Bengal, and the Bengalis are not, as a race, either liked or respected in other parts of India, even amongst Hindus, whilst the more martial races, Rajputs and Sikhs as well as Mahommedans, do not disguise their sentiments towards them".

It also stressed the need of shifting the capital out of the sphere of the Bengali influence which in Hardinge's opinion was "bad for the Government of India, bad for the Bengal Government and unfair to the other provinces".<sup>4</sup> Hardinge also tried to strengthen his argument by stating that the Muslims would be happy "to see the ancient capital of the Moghuls restored to its proud position as the seat of Empire".<sup>5</sup>

As for the partition, the Bengali feeling against it was described as "very wide-spread and unyielding", and it was

1. Sec. of State to Gov-Gen. - 11 & 12 Aug. 1911; (Telegrams), Ibid.

2. Sec. of State to Gov-Gen. - 15 Aug. 1911; Ibid. At first Crewe apprehended Morley's reaction to the scheme and asked Hardinge to change paras. 14 & 15 of the original despatch (which criticised Curzon's scheme), noting: "Lord Morley is a very powerful member of the Cabinet and he plunged rather deeply in his defence of the partition".

3. Crewe to Hardinge - 15 Aug. 1911; H.P., Vol. 113, U.L.C.

4. Gov-Gen. to Sec. of State - Aug. 1911; Draft Despatch A, Ibid., para. 4.

5. Ibid., para. 9.

"deeper and more persistent than the most pessimistic ever imagined possible;....It is now becoming a traditional grievance based on racial feeling, like Home Rule for Ireland, and as long as it exists we must be prepared for trouble in the two provinces of Bengal". 1

Hardinge admitted the conspicuous loyalty of the Muslims during the troublesome times and dropped a metaphorical tear at what he called a "severe blow" to their "self-esteem" by the loss of their overwhelming majority as a result of the modification. He admitted that the creation of a Governorship for Bengal would not "suffice to reconcile them to the change".<sup>2</sup> And yet he pointed out that the Muslims of Eastern Bengal would not suffer from the change; as with Dacca as a second capital the Governor would be in touch with their sentiments and interests.<sup>3</sup>

As Curzon had revised Risley's draft on the scheme of 1903, so did Hardinge change the original despatch. In the revised draft, the "unflattering remarks" about the Bengalis were omitted, the antagonism against the partition was relatively minimised and the remark that the undoing of the partition would be a severe blow to the Muslims was dropped.<sup>4</sup> The revised despatch did not have "quite the same sting" as the original one.<sup>5</sup>

Hardinge had accused Curzon for taking into consideration the special benefits of the partition to the Muslims as an "afterthought". He himself introduced a similar element in the revised despatch. Originally it was mentioned that the people of India and the Chiefs of Northern India in general and the Muslims in particular would welcome Delhi as the capital. Now Delhi was also referred to as being

"intimately associated in the minds of the Hindus with sacred legends which go back even beyond the dawn of history. It is in the plain of Delhi

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1. Ibid., para.9.

2. Ibid., para.19(ii).

3. Ibid., para.20.

4. Gov-Gen. - to Sec. of State - Aug. 1911; Despatch B, Ibid.

5. Hardinge to Crewe - 24 Aug. 1911; Ibid.

that the Pandava princes fought out with the Kurawas the epic struggle recorded in the Mahabharata, and celebrated on the banks of the Jumna the famous sacrifice which consecrated their title to the Empire. The Purana Kila still marks the site of the city which they founded and called Indraprastha,...".<sup>1</sup>

Unlike the unanimous approval by Curzon's Council, Hardinge faced some difficulty in getting the support of his Council to the despatch, for on 11 August 1911, he recorded in his diary:

"It received general approval except from Carlyle & possibly Butler". <sup>2</sup>

Hardinge was troubled about the attitude of Carlyle and Butler for his diary again contained the following:

"Carlyle as usual is recalcitrant, but I think that Jenkins will manage him. Butler is also tiresome as he heard ... that I had a high opinion of him & that he might become Lieut. Govr, if a vacancy occurred & now he sees his opportunity disappearing. He is a man who always looks just to No.1". <sup>3</sup>

Both the recalcitrant members were brought round, Butler by Wilson and Carlyle by Jenkins.<sup>4</sup> In spite of the pressures put on Butler and Carlyle, both seem to have given rather a hesitating approval. Butler, putting his finger on what perhaps was the weakest and the most inconsistent argument of the Government, wrote:

"I do not quite share the view as to the extent of the feeling about partition. All our pronouncements and all our official information

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1. Gov-Gen. - to Sec. of State - Aug. 1911; Despatch B, Ibid., para.6.
  2. Hardinge's diary - 11 Aug. 1911; H.C., Vp2, K.A.O.
  3. Ibid., 13 Aug. 1911. On 21 May 1912, Hardinge again wrote: "... during the 1½ years I have been here he [Carlyle] has invariably opposed me. I cannot remember one occasion on which he has been of assistance to me... In fact he is stupid. I have always thought so". See Hardinge's diary - 12 May 1912; H.C., Vp3, K.A.O.
  4. Wilson to Hardinge - 14 Aug. 1911; & Hardinge to Crewe - 24 Aug. 1911; H.P., Vol.113, U.L.C.

hitherto, ... have pointed to the decline in agitation and the difficulty which Surendranath Bannerjee and others have in keeping it up. It is possible that we may be criticised on this score". 1

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1. Butler's Note - 14 Aug. 1911; Ibid.

Butler was right. Not only the Government reports but also Hardinge had repeatedly written in that strain. The newspapers in Bengal had begun criticising the leaders for having started the agitation. The Indian Mirror remarked that the Swadeshi agitation had proved to be a "political game" and had been only a "vocal demonstration". (See the Indian Mirror - 19 April 1911; B.N.N.R., No.16.). The Nayak commented that the Swadeshi failed as it had been based on "spurious foundation". The paper blamed the "double faced, self aggrandising, dishonest leaders" for having not practised what they had preached to their poor countrymen. (See the Nayak - 6 May & 14 June 1911; Ibid., No.19 & 25 respectively.) The Sulabh Samachar regretting the use of religion to further political ends, satirically remarked that if Vedavyas had known that the Gita would be used to further the Swadeshi agitation, "he would have asked Sri Krishan to add a few chapters to suit present exigencies". (See the Sulabh Samachar - 28 July 1911; Ibid., No.31.). Unable to continue the enforcement of the boycott, Banerjea had himself announced the holding of a Swadeshi mela instead of the usual boycott anniversary to be held on 7 Aug.1911. (See the Bengalee - 15 July 1911.). For this reason, the Nihar called Banerjea a coward and asked him "to sound the trumpet of boycott clearly and openly" or to keep quiet. (See the Nihar (Contai) - 16 July 1911; B.N.N.R., No.31.). In fact the Hitavarta revealed what was already well known that Banerjea in 1910 had already dropped the boycott celebration at Baker's instance and was no more its advocate. (See the Hitavarta - 9 Nov.1911; Ibid., No.46.) It may be noted that the 1911 boycott anniversary which Banerjea converted into Swadeshi Mela was accompanied by no processions and the boycott resolution was<sup>not</sup> repeated. (See the Nayak - 8 & 9 Aug. 15 Sept. & 11 Oct. 1911; Ibid., Nos. 32, 34, 38 & 42 respectively.

The Government of India's undated despatch was sent with a private letter to Crewe on 31 August 1911.<sup>1</sup> Crewe revealed it to Morley before putting it to his Council. Morley at first seemed to be "earnestly and truly inspired by the policy" and promised to manage the House of Lords when the time came and not to let his "official conscience put too much of a strain" on his "physical resources", or his "aversion to tradition". He however quaked at the idea of associating the King with proposals which he considered would "provoke endless and furious controversy".<sup>2</sup>

Morley's inspiration seemed to have faded out after he went through the papers. He found the authority for the scheme to be "extremely weak" and noted:

"It is very well to talk of the G.G.'s Council, but what does that amount to? Fleetwood Wilson is well known to some of the Cabinet, and I appointed him ~~but~~ I doubt if any of us would regard him as a safe judge in so momentous a move in policy as this. The C. in C. was two years or more in the I.O., and him too I was responsible for, but neither I nor the Council would have dreamed of counting him for a competent adviser outside his own trade. Clarke, again, is, I hope and believe, turning out well in Commerce and Industry but his time in India has been short, and he must have needed all of it in mastering his special work. Carlyle is on the whole, not in favour of the move, but advises; and I confess that his line of argument seems to be unanswerable. The very point made so strongly against Curzon, that he launched partition without consultation, or adequate consultation, will be made much more strongly against you, for taking so large a step, without any consultation at all".<sup>3</sup>

Morley also thought that the Lieutenant-Governors ought to have been consulted and wrote:

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1. Hardinge to Crewe - 31 Aug. 1911; H.P., Vol. 113, U.L.C.
  2. Morley to Crewe - 21 Oct. 1911; Crewe Papers; The King's Durbar Announcement Volume, U.L.C.
  3. Morley to Crewe - 22 Oct. 1911; Ibid.

"If Curzon or anybody else should make this a ground for parliamentary attack, I don't think the defence would be very easy".

He could hardly find any justification for so rapid and untested a change except for "making a sensational coup of it at the durbar".<sup>1</sup>

Morley found the scheme revealing an "immense field of controversy" involving bitter issues. He therefore questioned if it was "wise to run the risks of making the Sovereign the author and exponent of it". As to its effect in India, he wrote:

"With all respect to men who know more about India than I pretend to know, I am wholly incredulous about the whole tide of enthusiasm".<sup>2</sup>

The objections foreseen by Morley did not weigh either with Hardinge or with Crewe. Crewe took for granted the adhesion of his Council, and arranged with Hardinge the text of the announcement by the King and the appointment of the future Governor of Bengal as if the project had already been approved. Like the word "Sesame" Crewe revealed it to his Council either at the end of October or on the first of November and secured their approval after three days of manoeuvring.<sup>3</sup> First Crewe approached Lee-Warner and was pleased to find him enthusiastic for the change of the capital as it involved "the abasement of Calcutta". Lee-Warner was less keen about the "concomitant features", because of what Crewe called his "conventional dislike of the Bengalis" and "from the thought that they might be pleased". During the next two days, Crewe had his Council in his private room, unrolled the plan, invited questions and only on the second day read out the despatch of the Government of India and his own reply which he had already prepared. Lee Warner, Barr, Touche, Ali Baig and Currie supported the scheme;

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1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

3. Crewe to Hardinge - 1 Nov. 1911; (Telegram). Also see Crewe to Hardinge - 3 Nov. 1911; H.P., Vol.113, U.L.C.

Raleigh, Edgerley and Thomson did not protest, but thought "the policy too large for a hasty opinion". Morison liked the Delhi idea but was concerned about the Muslims of Bengal.<sup>1</sup> Barnes deprecated Delhi<sup>2</sup> and so did Gupta "as a city of the dead". Crewe was relieved to get the approval of his Council and wrote to Hardinge:

"So take it altogether I was well satisfied, for it cannot be disguised that the meal is a large one to offer for hurried consumption and digestion, and I was grateful to my flock for taking it as they did".<sup>3</sup>

The Cabinet discussed the project on 8 and 9 November 1911, and approved it but only after a good deal of criticism from some of its members who apprehended discontent in Calcutta, and others who argued against "so radical a change" without consulting expert Indian opinion including the Lieutenant-Governors of the provinces. Eventually the Cabinet was obliged not to overrule the judgement of the Viceroy, the Secretary of State and their Councils in "a matter of purely internal administration". But there were "adverse criticisms" and "more difference of opinion" as to the expediency of having the announcement made by the King. Some of the members took it as "a doubtful if not dangerous experiment" which might result in a "prolonged and probably vehement controversy". Asquith eased the situation by suggesting that the risks "would be minimised, if not altogether actually removed" through a communication by Ministers to both Houses of Parliament to be made on the day of the Durbar but subsequent to the announcement by the King at Delhi.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Crewe to Hardinge - 3 Nov. 1911; Ibid.

2. Ibid. Barnes subsequently recorded a minute of dissent. He thought that the propositions would bring hostile criticism and that it was unwise to associate the King with the changes. As for Bengal, he thought that the agitation had died down and that the idea would be unwelcome to Muslims. See Barnes' Minute of Dissent - 11 Dec. 1911; C.C., Vol. 434.

3. Crewe to Hardinge - 3 Nov. 1911; H.P., Vol. 113, U.L.C.

4. Prime Minister to King - 9 Nov. 1911; (Cabinet Letter), Cabinet of 8 & 9 Nov. 1911; Asquith Papers, Bodleian Library, Oxford, Despatch Asquith 6. Also see Knollys to Asquith - 9 Nov. 1911; Ibid., Despatch Asquith 3.

The Cabinet however decided to inform the leaders of the opposition the evening before the announcement<sup>1</sup> so that it might not burst upon them as "a thunderclap" in Parliament.<sup>2</sup>

On December 12 1911, the King announced at Delhi the decision to transfer the seat of the Government of India from Calcutta to Delhi; the unification of Bengal and its elevation to a governor's province; the creation of a Lieutenant-Governorship comprising Bihar, Orissa and Chota Nagpur; and a Chief Commissionership for Assam. The exact nature of the redistribution of the boundaries was however to be determined by the Governor-General and the Secretary of State.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Prime Minister to King - 29 Nov. 1911; (Cabinet Letter), Ibid., Despatch Asquith 6.
  2. Asquith to Crewe - 30 Nov. 1911; Ibid., Despatch Asquith 46.
  3. On 1 April 1912 the new provinces came into being. Bhagalpur, Patna, Tirhut, Chota Nagpur and Orissa Divisions including Sambalpur district were constituted as the province of Bihar and Orissa under a Lieutenant-Governor; Bengal with Chittagong, Dacca, Rajshahi, Burdwan, and Presidency Divisions including the district of Darjeeling was given a Governor and Council and Assam was constituted as a Chief Commissioner's province. See East India (Reconstruction of the Province of Bengal, etc.) P.P., Cd. 6189.



## Chapter VII

The Aftermath

The administrative changes announced by the King were temporarily received by the Bengalis with jubilations.<sup>1</sup> The first press reactions were favourable: the people were asked to bow in homage to the King for undoing the "settled fact".<sup>2</sup> The Satya Sanatan Dharma even proposed that the King should stay on in India to govern the country and might as well appoint a Viceroy for administering Britain.<sup>3</sup> The Bengalis took the announcement of the King as a "nirmalya" (remains of the offerings of a deity)<sup>4</sup> and the Basumati thought that Bengal had become holy by the touch of the Emperor's feet.<sup>5</sup> The Nayak hoped that with Delhi as the new seat of Government, India would be governed "on the old Hindu lines" for Delhi had been once the capital of Hindu ruling dynasties.<sup>6</sup> For the Bengalee, the modification was an unique and memorable event in the annals of Bengal. The paper published a communication from certain leaders expressing their "profound homage", "devoted loyalty" and their "heart-felt gratitude" to the King.<sup>7</sup>

Surendra Nath Banerjea hastened to telegraph the Private Secretary of the Viceroy proposing an enthusiastic reception to Hardinge in Calcutta.<sup>8</sup> He also pleaded for the

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1. The Sanjivani - 14 Dec. 1911; B.N.N.R., No.51.
  2. The Hitavadi - 15 Dec. 1911; the Basumati - 16 Dec. 1911; the Khulnavasi - 16 Dec. 1911; the Bangavasi - 16 Dec. 1911; Ibid.
  3. The Satya Sanatan Dharma (Calcutta) 21 Dec. 1911; Ibid., No.52.
  4. The Hindi Bangavasi (Calcutta) - 1 Jan. 1912; Ibid.
  5. The Basumati - 30 Dec. 1911; Ibid.
  6. The Nayak - 6 Jan. 1911; Ibid., No. 2 of 1912.
  7. The Bengalee - 17 Dec. 1911. Signatories of the letter were: T.Palit, Rash Behari Ghose, Moti Lal Ghose, A.Chaudhuri, B. Chakravarti, K.B. Dutt, A.Rasul, Ambika Charan Mazumdar, Ananda Chandra Ray, Ananda Bandhu Guha, Nilratan Sircar, Krishna Kumar Mitra, J.Chaudhuri, & Surendra Nath Banerjea.
  8. Surendra Nath Banerjea to Viceroy's Private Sec. - 14 Dec. 1911; (Telegram), H.P., Vol.82, U.L.C.

acceptance of an address of thanks to the Queen from the Bengali ladies.<sup>1</sup> Bhupendranath Basu suggested a deputation to wait on the Secretary of State to express the gratitude of the Bengalis at the reunion of the province.<sup>2</sup>

Hardinge was gratified at what he called an "absolutely enthusiastic" reception of the changes by India. He doubted if "any measure had ever had such a degree of popularity...".<sup>3</sup>

He was astonished to witness the extraordinary emotional outburst of the Bengalis when the King went to Calcutta and noted,

"...the King's announcement of the modification of the partition assisted a good deal, but much was undoubtedly due to the religious idea of the divinity of the Sovereign".<sup>4</sup>

To a certain extent the Bengalis were induced into accepting the changes by the logic of paragraph three of the Government of India's despatch. According to this communication, the Government sought to solve the problem of the devolution of power in order to satisfy "the just demands of Indians for a larger share in the government of the country". This, the Government thought, could be done by giving

"the provinces a larger measure of self-government until at last India would consist of a number of administrations, autonomous in all provincial affairs, with the Government of India above them all, and possessing power to interfere in case of misgovernment, but ordinarily restricting their functions to matters of Imperial concern".

For achieving this the Government believed that the Supreme Government should not be associated with any Provincial Government. Thus the Government argued that the removal of the capital would "facilitate the growth of local self-government on sound and safe lines".<sup>5</sup>

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1. Ibid., 23 Dec. 1911.

2. Bhupendra Nath Basu to Viceroy's Private Sec. - 1 Jan. 1912; H.C., Va7, K.A.O.

3. Hardinge to Sanderson - 1 Jan. 1912; H.P., Vol.92, U.L.C.

4. Hardinge to Ritchie - 25 Jan. 1912; Ibid., Vol.118.

5. Gov-Gen. to Sec. of State - 25 Aug. 1911. H.P., Vol.113, para.3, U.L.C.

Hardinge, while incorporating verbatim the paragraph from the note of Jenkins of 24 June 1911, did not fully realise that for the educated Indians who had been agitating for some sort of self-government for India, the despatch would open a new field of controversy. However, for the time being, the Bengalis amused themselves by reading into the paragraph that the boon of provincial autonomy and self-government was round the corner. For the Bengalee no part of the Government's despatch was as important and significant as that referred to above. The journal thanked Hardinge for promising Provincial self-government and hoped that the day was not far off when the King would confer self-government upon the Indians.<sup>1</sup> It justified the transfer of the capital in the interest of provincial autonomy,<sup>2</sup> and thought that autonomy for one province would ultimately lead to the autonomy for the rest of India.<sup>3</sup> In its issue of 15 February 1912, the Bengalee noted:

"It is the prospect of autonomous government in the near future that has reconciled the people of Bengal to the dethronement of Calcutta from her Imperial position, and has definitely barred the way to any agitation against the transfer of the capital".<sup>4</sup>

The Bihar Herald regarded the changes "as practically conferring Home Rule in Bengal".<sup>5</sup> The same view was expressed by the Hindoo Patriot which asked the people not to criticise the changes, for the Government had a higher object in view - the granting of autonomy.<sup>6</sup>

The Bengalis read much more into the meaning of the

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1. The Bengalee - 14 Dec. 1911. Also see the Amrita Bazar Patrika - 16 Dec. 1911; B.N.N.R., No.51.
  2. The Bengalee - 9 Jan. 1912.
  3. Ibid., 10 Jan. 1912.
  4. Ibid., 15 Feb. 1912.
  5. The Bihar Herald (Patna) - 16 Dec. 1911; B.N.N.R., No.51. Also see the Bharat Mitra - 19 Dec. 1911; Ibid.; the Sanjivani - 21 Dec. 1911; Ibid., No.52, & the Hitavadi - 22 Dec. 1911; Ibid.
  6. The Hindoo Patriot - 18 Dec. 1911; Ibid., No.51.

paragraph than was intended. The despatch was a mirage and the Bengalis deluded themselves with wild dreams of autonomy and self-government. Neither Hardinge nor Crewe had any such intentions. Hardinge, being a diplomat, apparently played a subtle game by letting the Bengalis say and write whatever pleased them, and did nothing to dispel the delusion. Why should he have disturbed the tide of public enthusiasm which was running in the Government's favour? Later, he however, admitted to Crewe that the insertion of the paragraph was "a tactical mistake", but explained that it was meant to be focussed on the question of the capital's transfer to Delhi rather than on the future constitution of the Government of India.

To Hardinge a Colonial self-government for India on the lines of Canada and Australia was "absolutely out of the question". The "community of race, blood and religion" which linked the British Government with her European colonies were absent in the case of India. "The pace", wrote Hardinge, "has been quite fast enough of late - it would be wicked to accelerate it at the present time".<sup>1</sup>

Crewe's approach was not different. His reaction can be judged by the fact that when Montagu the Under-Secretary of State suggested that the new building for the Legislative Council in Delhi should be planned on the lines of a Parliamentary House, Crewe wrote that even "names and forms" mattered and as the extremists in India regarded a Parliament as their ultimate goal, "no colour should be given to any notion that we favour their hopes". Crewe emphasised that, so long as he had anything to do with it, it was going to be the Viceroy's Council, and "the circumstances and surroundings

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1. Hardinge to Crewe - 4 July 1912; H.P., Vol.118, U.L.C.  
 Also see Hardinge to Clarke - 2 July 1912; Ibid., Vol.83,  
 Craddock to Hardinge - 2 July 1912; Ibid., & Hardinge to  
 Carmichael - 2 July 1912; Ibid.

should emphasise the fact".<sup>1</sup>

As for self-government, Crewe dispelled the "hallucination" by writing:

"It is an ideal dream, when it is not a revolutionary project; and while our quarrel with the dreamers need be only an intellectual one, not ending in the Andaman Islands, it is just as well that they should be clear in their minds as to our real position and aims".<sup>2</sup>

For the time being it mattered little as to what the dreamers had been dreaming, but the reference to autonomy and self-government in the despatch had helped to lull them to sleep over the changes. However, before long they were awakened and began to realise the hard realities which they had been reluctant to face in view of the reunion of the province.

But Hardinge in his correspondence as well as in his book noted only one side of the story. Being himself the author he painted rather a rosy picture of the reception of the new arrangements. The fact could not however be disguised

1. Crewe to Hardinge - 5 July 1912; H.P., Vol.118, U.L.C.  
In a subsequent letter Crewe quoted the following from G.C.Lewis's essay on the Government of Dependencies:

"The constitution of the Local Government ought not to be concerned in a form, or the provisions expressed in terms, by which the inhabitants of the dependency might be naturally led to suppose their country a virtually independent state. The English Government, in framing the political institutions of its dependencies, has not been sufficiently careful to give them such a form as might suggest the idea of their subordinate character ... and has acquiesced in the use of form and language by the legislative body of the dependency, which seem to imply that its government was co-ordinate with, and not sub-ordinate to, the government of the dominant country". Crewe thought that Lewis had presumably Canada in mind when he wrote the above; Crewe added "but Canada has lost the position of subordination which India will have to maintain if she is to continue part of the Empire, and the warning is therefore a sound one for us". See Crewe to Hardinge - 22 Aug. 1912; Ibid., Vol.118. Also see Hardinge to Crewe - 24 July 1912; Ibid.

2. Crewe to Hardinge - 18 July 1912; Ibid.

that the enchantment of the proposals started fading away no sooner than they were announced. The Amrita Bazar Patrika, though happy at the reunion of Bengal, thought it to be a waste of money to raise the "famine-stricken and pestilence ridden" Bihar and Orissa to a Lieutenant-Governor's province. It viewed the shifting of the capital as wounding the "amour propre" of Bengal and reducing the commercial importance of Calcutta and warned Hardinge of the heart-burning it would cause amongst the Bengalis.<sup>1</sup> The Hindoo Patriot remarked that the change of the seat of the Government would be a "lasting loss to Bengal".<sup>2</sup> The Bharat Mitra prophesied that the Bengalis before long would realise the loss they had sustained by the removal of the capital and the separation of other tracts.<sup>3</sup> The Indian Mirror, referring to the real feelings of the people, stated that the modification had been obtained "at too dear a price" and that even the leaders of the anti-partition agitation realised that the previous arrangement would have been preferred to the loss involved by the change of the capital.<sup>4</sup> It held the leaders of the agitation responsible for lowering the status of Calcutta and asserted that if a plebiscite were taken, the verdict would have been in favour of a status quo.<sup>5</sup> The Nayak regarded Delhi as a cursed place - "no dynasty established in Delhi will be permanent" - as it was the graveyard of many ruling houses and dynasties. It reminded the Government of the moral: the house of Prithivi Raj, the Pathan dynasty and the Mughal rule all came to an end.<sup>6</sup>

Since the Government of India's despatch as well as the King's announcement left the question of the future boundaries of the provinces undetermined, it gave rise to

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1. The Amrita Bazar Patrika - 14 Dec. 1911; B.N.N.R., No.51.
  2. The Hindoo Patriot - 15 Dec. 1911; Ibid. Also see the Indian Mirror - 15 Dec. 1911; Ibid.
  3. The Bharat Mitra - 16 Dec. 1911; Ibid.
  4. The Indian Mirror - 16 Dec. 1911; Ibid.
  5. The Indian Mirror - 17 Dec. 1911; Ibid.
  6. The Nayak - 19 Dec. 1911; Ibid.

agitation. It also provided an opportunity to the Bengalis to demand the areas according to their own whims. They made wild demands and agitated for as much as they could obtain. Their demands were not based on reason nor were they consistent with their own arguments. Sylhet, Cachar, Goalpara they claimed as being Bengali-speaking districts.<sup>1</sup> For certain other areas such as Baidynath, Giridih, Paresnath, and Madhupur, they put up the plea that they should be incorporated with Bengal as they had been developed by the Bengalis.<sup>2</sup> Other areas were demanded on the grounds of their being regarded as healthy places.<sup>3</sup> Where a full district did not show a Bengali majority, they asked for its division, as in the case of Purnea, Balasore, Sonthal Parganas and Singhbhum.<sup>4</sup> They demanded Darjeeling, as it had always been a part of Bengal, Purnea, as it bore the features of a Bengali district, Bhagalpur on the grounds that during the Dasehra festival, the Bengalis worshipped Durga by making images of clay and that such images were made and worshipped largely in Bhagalpur. They pleaded that for the loss of tracts belonging to Bihar which the Bengalis claimed, Bihar could be compensated by the transfer of certain areas from the United Provinces.<sup>5</sup> The Bengalis thought that the five Bengali-speaking divisions were not enough and asked for a larger area in order to afford "some room for the expansion of the over-congested population".<sup>6</sup> How unreasonable, inconsistent and selfish was their attitude can be shown by the fact that the Bengalis who had previously opposed the division of Mymensingh and Midnapore districts

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1. The Bengalee - 19 Dec. 1911.
  2. The Samay - 29 Dec. 1911; B.N.N.R., No.1 of 1904.
  3. The Hitavadi - 29 Dec. 1911; Ibid.
  4. The Sanjivani - 21 Dec. 1911; Ibid., No.52. Also see the Hitavadi - 22 Dec. 1911; Ibid., the Samay - 22 Dec. 1911; Ibid., & the Bengalee - 27 Dec. 1911.
  5. A Note on the Redistribution of Bengal, North Western Boundary by Lahiri, B.K., & Sarkar, C.S., 7 Jan. 1912; J. & P. Dept., File 1066, Vol.1141 of 1912.
  6. Lahiri, B.K., The Redistribution of Bengal, (Pamphlet), Ibid., paras. 4-6.

into smaller units (as these districts were very large) were now advocating the division of much smaller districts of Bihar and Chota Nagpur. The demand for Manbhum and Hazaribagh was for no other reasons than its rich mines.<sup>1</sup>

Hardinge, it seems, was disgusted with the demands made by the Bengalis. On 23 January 1912, he wrote to Crewe that a great deal of agitation was going on in connection with the fixation of provincial boundaries and that everybody was "trying to get a little bit from his neighbour".<sup>2</sup> In order to resolve the issue, he declared that there would be no re-arrangement of the boundaries except what had been announced by the Government.<sup>3</sup> Hardinge's declaration was a disappointment to the Bengalis.<sup>4</sup> His hitherto "sweet words" started producing "a souring effect". The Bengalis had found a divided Bengal re-united, but they were unhappy at its being cut into three - Bengal, Bihar and Assam.<sup>5</sup> The Amrita Bazar Patrika called the boon "sweet-bitter", first it appeared to be sweet but the Bengalis found it bitter.<sup>6</sup> The paper thought that Hardinge's proposals had cut at the very roots of the "Bengali nation". Their province was to be relegated to the status of a second rate one by virtue of its reduced size and because of the fact that it was being "shorn of its most vigorous limbs". The Patrika regarded the measure as "one of the worst ever conceived". All the objections, it wrote, "against the Curzonian partition apply with still greater force to

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1. See above, p.183. Also see memorial from Maharaja of Cossimbazar to Viceroy, (n.d.). I.H.P. Delhi Procs., 1912, Vol. 8949, Proc.56. At a public meeting held in the Calcutta Town Hall on 26 March 1912, a resolution was passed for the incorporation of Sylhet, Goalpara, Purnea east of Mahananda, Sonthal Parganas, Manbhum, and Dhalbhum into Bengal. See J. & P. Dept., File 1806, Vol.1154 of 1912.
  2. Hardinge to Crewe - 23 Jan. 1912; H.P., Vol.118, U.L.C.
  3. Speeches of Lord Hardinge, p.162.
  4. The Bengalee - 28 Jan. 1912. Also see the Sanjivani - 1 Feb. 1912; B.N.N.R., No.6.
  5. The Nayak - 2 Feb. 1912; Ibid.
  6. The Amrita Bazar Patrika - 1 Feb. 1912; Ibid.



this re-partition".<sup>1</sup> The boon was nicknamed the "Delhi laddu" - those who tasted it and those who missed it were equally disappointed.<sup>2</sup> In spite of Hardinge's declaration, the agitation continued,<sup>3</sup> especially about the incorporation of Sylhet.<sup>4</sup>

Having failed to get what they wanted, the Bengalis adopted other tactics. A few days before the new provinces were to come into operation, the Orissa Tenancy Law and Mining Law was being discussed in the Bengal Legislative Council. This bill was passed on 27 March 1912, with over two hundred and sixty amendments and was brought to Hardinge just before he was to leave for Patiala - the viceregal carriage was waiting to take him to the railway station. The Bengalis were keen to get Hardinge's assent as many of them had land in Orissa. Hardinge perceived that they had been rushing through the legislation in order to "safeguard their own interests" before Orissa became a part of the new province of Bihar. He therefore withheld the assent observing:

"I think it was monstrous that an attempt should have been made to rush me in this manner".<sup>5</sup>

Hardinge found it "impossible to shut entirely the mouths of Bengalis",<sup>6</sup> and had to face considerable opposition when he proposed the establishment of a University at Dacca. The suggestion brought forth severe criticism and agitation from the Bengalis who even proposed to raise subscriptions to start an agitation against the project in England.<sup>7</sup> Now they

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1. Ibid., 9 Feb. 1912; Ibid., No.7.
  2. The Nayak - 27 Jan. 1912; Ibid., No.5. Also see the Sri Sri Vishnu Priya-o-Ananda Bazar Patrika - 15 Feb. 1912; Ibid., No.8.
  3. Govt. of Bengal to Govt. of India - 21 Feb. 1912; J. & P. Dept., File 945, Vol.1139 of 1912, L. No. 2243, para.4. Also see Govt. of Bengal to Govt. of India - 19 March 1912; Ibid., L.No. 3172, para.3.
  4. Earlie to Hardinge - 18 July, 7,9,12,22, & 30 Aug. 1912; H.P., Vol.83, U.L.C. Also see Hardinge to Earlie - 5 & 28 Aug. 1912; Ibid.
  5. Hardinge to Crewe - 28 March & 17 April 1912; Ibid., Vol.118. Also see Hardinge's diary - 27 March 1912; H.C., Vp3, K.A.O.
  6. Hardinge to Crewe - 22 Feb. 1912; H.P., Vol.118, U.L.C.
  7. Encl. in Bayley to Hardinge - 12 Feb. 1912; Ibid., Vol.83.

cried out that it was an "Educational Partition of Bengal".<sup>1</sup> The move was regarded as worse than territorial partition.<sup>2</sup> Surendra Nath Banerjea in his speech in the Calcutta Town Hall declared that the project would be "fraught with the direst results to the province".<sup>3</sup> His paper, Bengalee warned the government not to plunge the country into the "vortex of agitation which will not fail to rekindle the dying embers of unrest and irritation".<sup>4</sup> The Bengali papers launched a campaign against the project. The Sanjivani wrote that East Bengal was a poor province and that it needed primary schools, high schools and colleges but not a university.<sup>5</sup> The Basumati thought that a new university would lead to different systems and ideals in education which would extinguish the national spirit among the Bengalis.<sup>6</sup> The Hitavadi observed that as the introduction of provincial dialects was aimed at weakening the Bengalis linguistically, so would the establishment of a new university affect their unity.<sup>7</sup> The Telegraph commented that the project was not different from that of Curzon - Curzon divided Bengal territorially, Hardinge's aim was to split up the Bengalis educationally.<sup>8</sup> The Bharat Mitra commented that Curzon "invited but disregarded public opinion" but Hardinge in proposing the University had "denied its very existence".<sup>9</sup> The Amrita Bazar Patrika wrote that, since the majority of the people in East Bengal were agriculturists, they needed primary ~~education~~ and not higher education. Since money was required for the new university, the paper thought that it was unjust to fasten its cost on Hindus when they did not need it. It proposed that the cost be borne by the

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1. Hardinge to Chirol - 12 Feb. 1912; Ibid., Vol.92.

2. The Bengalee - 4 Feb. 1912.

3. The Amrita Bazar Patrika - 5 Feb. 1912; B.N.N.R., No.6.

4. The Bengalee - 6 Feb. 1912.

5. The Sanjivani - 8 Feb. 1912; B.N.N.R., No.7.

6. The Basumati - 10 Feb. 1912; Ibid.

7. The Hitavadi - 16 Feb. 1912; Ibid., No.8.

8. The Telegraph (Calcutta) - 10 Feb. 1912; Ibid., No.7.

9. The Bharat Mitra - 10 Feb. 1912; Ibid.

Muslims alone.<sup>1</sup> The Nayak cried "Boons - Boons - Boons. We are sick unto death of these boons". The paper wrote that Hardinge had made a fool of the Bengalis by his boons.<sup>2</sup>

Hardinge faced considerable difficulty in quieting down the agitation. He thought their sole object was "to stop if possible, educational facilities being given to the Mahomedans of Eastern Bengal". But in fact the material interests of the leaders were also involved.<sup>3</sup> The agitators were even prepared to join hands with the Europeans to demand Hardinge's recall.<sup>4</sup> Though Butler advised Hardinge not to bother and to "let the snarling dogs snarl themselves out",<sup>5</sup> Hardinge received a deputation of the Hindus including Surendra Nath Banerjea, who, in Chirol's words, was "the most pestilent of all",<sup>6</sup> and whom O'Donnell thought to be acting like "an ungrateful fool".<sup>7</sup> Hardinge was able to weaken the deputationists by stating that the proposed University was to be a teaching University.<sup>8</sup> Even Crewe had no patience with the

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1. The Amrita Bazar Patrika - 17 Feb. 1912; Ibid., No.8. The Hindoo Patriot remarked that two universities in a single province would impose a burden on the exchequer. See the Hindoo Patriot - 9 Feb. 1912; Ibid., No.7. Also see the Indian Mirror - 13 Feb. 1912; Ibid. The paper wrote that the move would ruin the private institutions.
  2. The Nayak - 3 Feb. 1912; Ibid., No.6.
  3. Hardinge to Crewe - 27 March 1912, H.P., Vol.118, U.L.C. Surendra Nath Banerjea opposed the project as he had a financial stake in Ripon College; Bhupendra Nath Basu, because he owned large house property in Calcutta which was rented out to students. See Sharp to Du Boulay - 14 Feb. 1912; Ibid., Vol.83. Also see Hardinge to Chirol - 12 Feb. 1912; Ibid., Vol.92; Hardinge to Crewe - 22 Feb. 1912; Ibid., Vol.118; Hardinge to Clarke - 26 Feb. 1912; Ibid., Vol.83.
  4. Butler to Hardinge - 16 Feb. 1912; Ibid. Also see Maharaja of Darbangha to Butler - 14 Feb. 1912, Encl. in above.
  5. Butler to Hardinge - 3 Feb. 1912; Ibid.
  6. Chirol to Hardinge - 7 March 1912; Ibid., Vol.92.
  7. O'Donnell to Hardinge - 25 April 1912; Ibid.
  8. Hardinge received the deputation and convinced them of the need of having a teaching University unlike the Calcutta University which was mainly an examining body. See Hardinge's diary of 10, 12 & 16 Feb. 1912; H.C., Vp3, K.A.O. Also see Hardinge's reply to the Deputation, Speeches of Lord Hardinge, Vol.I, pp.179-191. Also see Hardinge to Crewe - 14 March 1912; H.P., Vol.118, U.L.C. and Hardinge to Crewe - 27 March 1912; Ibid.

"idiotic attack" by the Bengalis<sup>1</sup> on the project and was happy to know that Hardinge was able to "snub the Bengali side of the pro-Calcutta Cult", which Crewe thought to be as "silly and mischievous as the English variety".<sup>2</sup>

Hardinge's claim of the popularity of the measure is also belied by the statements of many persons - both officials and non-officials, who while writing to Curzon condemned the changes. The reversal of the "settled fact" was an unpleasant surprise to many, especially when it was recognised that the East Bengal area had immensely benefitted by Curzon's partition.<sup>3</sup> Sir Hugh Barnes regarded the change<sup>as</sup> "an act of stupendous folly" on the part of the Government.<sup>4</sup> Hewett, the Lieutenant-Governor of the United Provinces, reported that European as well as native opinion of any value had been against the re-union of Bengal.<sup>5</sup> Writing about four months after the announcement, he had no reason to change his views, and thought that Hardinge was "making big splashes without proper consideration" and that he was a "tremendous opportunist".<sup>6</sup> Sir Francis Younghusband found no justification for what had been done and held the view that the Bengalis, "by making themselves a cursed nuisance" for a long time, had bored the Government in granting their request.<sup>7</sup> Hamilton, the Secretary of State in Curzon's days, approved the transfer of the capital but was sorry that the partition had been interfered with.<sup>8</sup> C.B. Bayley was "deeply shocked at the Government's "breach of faith". He

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1. Crewe to Hardinge - 8 March 1912. Ibid. Earlier Crewe observed that Calcutta was bound to "protest against any particular attention shown to E. Bengal". See Crewe's Note - 12 Feb. 1912; J. & P. Dept., File 615, Vol. 1135 of 1912. Also see Baig's Note of 12 Feb. 1912; Ibid.
  2. Crewe to Hardinge - 18 April 1912; Ibid.
  3. Brown to Curzon - 12 Dec. 1911; C.C., Vol. 434.
  4. Barnes to Curzon - 12 Dec. 1911; Ibid. Barnes was a member of Crewe's Council.
  5. Hewett to Curzon - 20 Dec. 1911; Ibid.
  6. Ibid., 24 April 1911.
  7. Younghusband to Curzon - 29 Dec. 1911; Ibid.
  8. Hamilton to Curzon - 9 Jan. 1912; Ibid.

referred to the statement in the Government of India's despatch that the agitation was strong against the partition as "utterly false as the agitation was dead as could be...".<sup>1</sup> Ampthill called the coup "a successful piece of political opportunism ... entirely contrary to all our constitutional principles...". But in view of upholding the "prestige of the Crown without which it would be impossible to keep the Empire together", Ampthill advised Curzon not to criticise the measure severely.<sup>2</sup> Hare, who had recently retired as the Lieutenant-Governor of East Bengal and Assam, condemned the changes.<sup>3</sup> John Finlay who as member of Curzon's council was associated with the partition when it was first initiated, was filled with indignation at what he called the "pusillanimous folly" of reversing the partition and the "childish folly" of removing the capital. He was grieved at the "degradation of the King" by his association with the decision.<sup>4</sup> He wrote:

"The peoples' faith in an Englishman's word has been shaken, the face of the late Secretary of State has been blackened; and so have the faces of the officials of Eastern Bengal from the Lieutenant-Governor to the District Officer...".<sup>5</sup>

Fraser who had taken a leading part in devising Curzon's scheme of partition, found the decision "startling", but was reluctant to prove to the Indians that the "King had been mistaken or misled". He was therefore inclined to support the "irrevocable decision".<sup>6</sup> Bourdillon, who had acted as a Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, thought it to be an "ill-considered measure bristling with difficulties" which was bound to create an impression that the Government was "susceptible to pressure" and that an agitation if "maintained with sufficient persistence" was sure to be fruitful. Citing

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1. C.B.Bayley to Curzon - 11 Jan. 1912; Ibid. C.B.Bayley was Asstt. Sec. P.W.D. Govt. of Bengal. Retired in 1906.
  2. Ampthill to Curzon - 15 Jan. 1912; Ibid.
  3. Hare to Curzon - 24 Jan. 1912; Ibid. Also see his letter of 20 Feb. 1912; Ibid.
  4. Finlay to Curzon - 28 Jan. 1912; Ibid.
  5. Finlay's letter designed for publication; Ibid.
  6. Fraser to Curzon - 29 Jan. 1912; Ibid.

a Judge of the High Court he wrote that the Government of India's despatch on modification failed "in both accuracy and sincerity" and that if the Government thought that the changes would put an end to the unrest, they would soon be disappointed<sup>1</sup> - a prophecy which proved only to be too true. R.Nathan, the Commissioner of the Dacca Division, called the coup "the triumph of the anti-British agitators" and forecast:

"If the new Government thinks that it is going to have an easy time, it is greatly mistaken".<sup>2</sup>

Likewise, C.S. Bayley, who took over as the Lieutenant-Governor of the new province of Bihar and Orissa, regarded the annulment a "grievous political blunder". He was sorry for East Bengal which he thought, would once again face "the baneful competition of Calcutta".<sup>3</sup> Lalit K. Mukherji, a Bengali leader thought that the change of the capital would <sup>destroy</sup> ~~vanish~~ the "All-India character of the Bengali race"; that it would deprive the middle class Bengalis of employment. "Nay", he added, "we fear the educated folk of our country will no more be admitted into the Public Service of Behar, Chota Nagpur and Orissa,... The cry has gone forth that "Behar is for the Behares". Defending Curzon's partition, Mukherji wrote that

"excepting a few so-called "leaders" of interested motives, and a handful of lawyers who engineered an artificial agitation for the delectation of the impressionable school boys",

the Bengalis as a whole had ceased to agitate about it. "Those who advised the King", he concluded, "should have consulted the majority instead of satisfying the minority".<sup>4</sup>

Lest the views given above might be considered an attempt of the men associated with Curzon to wipe his tears over the extinction of a measure of which he was the chief

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1. Bourdillon to Curzon - 31 Jan. 1912; Ibid.

2. Nathan to Curzon - 11 April 1912; Ibid.

3. C.S. Bayley to Curzon - 12 Aug. 1912; Ibid. Also see his letter of 25 Jan. 1912; Ibid.

4. Mukherji to Curzon - 29 Feb. 1912; Ibid.

architect, it is necessary to examine the opinions<sup>received</sup> by Minto from various quarters. Butler, a member of Hardinge's Council who had signed the despatch reluctantly, giving his views a week after the announcement of the changes, wrote to Minto that he approved of the transfer of the capital in order to get rid of the "Bengalee infection", though he was not inclined towards "reversing a fait accompli" but had to agree.<sup>2</sup> On 13 May 1912, he again wrote to Minto to the effect that the changes had turned the head of Gokhale who was "claiming practical equality with the Europeans". He added that though the agitation against the partition was dead, he had reluctantly come to the conclusion to re-unite the two Bengals and let them "stew in their own juice instead of affecting the whole of India".<sup>2</sup> Baker who had recently retired as the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal found it impossible to defend the "coup d'etat" and feared that the Government had "laid up against trouble for their successors".<sup>3</sup> Arundel, an ex-member of Minto's Council, thought that the Bengali jubilation would be short-lived and that they would soon "find a good deal to regret" in the removal of the capital.<sup>4</sup> The same view was expressed by Pinhey, Minto's Private Secretary who wrote that the enthusiasm initially exhibited was all "personal to the King & Queen" and was not "likely to be shared by the Govt. of India or at any rate by the poor Viceroy". Hardinge he thought was very unpopular and "hurried in silence ... whenever he put in an appearance".<sup>5</sup> Dunlop Smith was concerned about another aspect - "that the British, no matter what they say, have no finality in their policy except that of yielding to agitation so long as it is persistent enough".<sup>6</sup> Sinha, an

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1. Butler to Minto - 21 Dec. 1911; Minto Papers, Box 3, Series 3. 230.

2. Butler to Minto - 13 May 1912; Ibid.

3. Baker to Minto - 29 Dec. 1911; Ibid., Box 4. Series 2.226.

4. Arundel to Minto - 31 Dec. 1911; Ibid.

5. Pinhey to Minto - 17 Jan. 1912; Ibid.

6. Dunlop Smith to Minto - 15 Jan. 1912; Ibid. Box 3. Series 3. 230. Adamson & Robertson expressed the same views. See Robertson to Minto - 8 Feb. 1912; Ibid., Box 4. Series 2. 226 & Adamson to Mary Minto - 22 Feb. 1912; Ibid.

ex-member of Viceroy's Council, looked upon the changes as "unmitigated disasters" and observed:

"Those who think that the Bengalis as a race welcome these changes are sadly mistaken. Even the most violent anti-partitionists admit, though perhaps not publicly, that they have lost a great deal more than they have gained".

Sinha was happy that he was no longer holding the post he held, as otherwise he "would have resigned rather than agreed to them".<sup>1</sup> The Europeans of Calcutta were also unhappy about the changes.<sup>2</sup>

Morley's prophecy that the changes would form a subject of criticism proved true. Even Hardinge was worried about the controversy in Parliament and admitted that "the constitutional aspect" of the case was "perhaps the weakest". Hardinge was sure about Curzon's condemnation of the measure and had armed himself by asking Chirol to fight his battle "stoutly and with ... ability" while discussing the case with Curzon.<sup>3</sup> The Unionists in Parliament had deferred the discussion until the return of the King from India, but the

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1. Sinha to Minto - 16 May 1912; Ibid., 223. The same view was expressed by Sinha to Earlie. See Earlie to Du Boulay - 23 Dec. 1911; H.P., Vol.82; U.L.C. Hardinge also noted in his diary that after the changes had been put into effect, Sinha complained to Hardinge that the administration in Bihar was "Bengali in type & unsympathetic towards Bihar". See Hardinge's diary - 19 Sept. 1912; H.C., Vp3, K.A.O.
  2. See Jenkins to Hardinge - 15 Dec. 1911; H.P., Vol.82, U.L.C. Also see Hardinge to Morley - 27 Dec. 1911, Hardinge to Inchcape - 27 Dec. 1911 & Hardinge to Sanderson - 1 Jan. 1912; Ibid., Vol.92. The Anglo-Indian newspapers likened Hardinge to Siraj-ud-daula, "the scourge of Bengal". See Hardinge to Crewe - 27 March 1912; Ibid., Vol.118. The Statesman of 14 Dec. 1911, urged Hardinge's recall. When Hardinge left Calcutta for Delhi, he recorded in his diary: "Candidly I am not sorry to have left Calcutta & I have no desire to return until the English of Calcutta are in a better frame of mind". See Hardinge's diary - 28 March 1912; H.C., Vp3, K.A.O.
  3. Hardinge to Chirol - 11 Jan. 1912; H.P., Vol.92, U.L.C.



Government encountered bitter attacks in spite of Lansdowne's declaration in the Lords that the word of the King had been passed and that it was "irrevocable".<sup>1</sup>

On his return the King called Lansdowne, probably in an attempt to dissuade him from criticising the measure. Lansdowne however told the King that "he must expect criticism in Parliament" for whatever might be the merits of the case Lansdowne felt obliged to challenge the methods employed by the Government of India.<sup>2</sup>

The Unionists charged the Government with adopting unconstitutional procedure and misusing the authority of the King. Bonar Law said in the House of Commons that the measure involved the "exercise of arbitrary and despotic power" by the Government. He asked what would have been the attitude of the Liberals if a Unionist Government had done this. Supposing, asked Bonar Law, Disraeli had induced Victoria to become the Empress of India and that she had made the first announcement in India to that effect without the knowledge of Parliament? "Yet that is precisely what the Government have done now".<sup>3</sup> The argument was freely used by the Unionists in their parliamentary attack on the Government.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Speeches of Asquith, Bonar Law, Morley, Lansdowne, Curzon - 12 Dec. 1912; 32, H.C.Debs., 5s, cols.2154-5, 10, H.L.Debs., 5s, cols.801-5. MacDonnell, a former Lieutenant-Governor of the United Provinces welcomed the decision, Ibid., col.804.
  2. Lansdowne to Curzon - 7 Feb. 1912; C.C., Vol. 434. Also see Lansdowne to Curzon - 28 Jan. 1912; Ibid. Also see Chamberlain, op.cit., pp.409-12.
  3. Speech of Bonar Law - 14 Feb. 1912; 34, H.C.Debs., 5s, cols. 18-9.
  4. Speech of Curzon - 21 Feb. 1912; 11, H.L.Debs., 5s, cols. 141-2. Curzon said, "You have done in India what no British Government has ever done there before. You have done what you would not have dared to attempt in England, what if we had attempted to do either here or in India you would have made the heavens ring with your denunciations and you have done it in a manner that saves you from retribution and screens you from attack".

Those who supported the Government's policy compared the action with Curzon's partition. The Tories, however, reiterated that this was carried out not in secrecy but with full knowledge of Parliament.<sup>1</sup> Montagu contended that it mattered little whether the King or the Viceroy had made an announcement - an announcement<sup>by Govt.</sup> carried the same sanctity.<sup>2</sup> Bonar Law maintained that Montagu's reasoning ignored constitutional facts and dealt in technicalities.<sup>3</sup>

Morley defended the Government's action though he had found it difficult to defend it in his private communication with Crewe.<sup>4</sup> Knowing well as he did that the Cabinet had hardly anything to do with it, he said that the Cabinet was right in dictating the policy, which had been justified by its results.<sup>5</sup> It is however clear that even the supporters of the Government found it difficult to defend the constitutional aspect of the issue and offered a defence based on expediency - "a very magnificent piece of presumption... justified by results".<sup>6</sup>

1. Speech of Prime Minister - 14 Feb. 1912; 34, H.C.Debs., 5s, cols. 29-31; speeches of Curzon, Crewe, MacDonnell, Morley and Lansdowne - 21 & 22 Feb. 1912; 11, H.L.Debs., 5s, cols. 137-88, 205-19 & 225-43. Also see speeches of Herbert Roberts & Montagu - 22 April 1912; 37, H.C.Debs., 5s, 786-92.
2. Speech of Edwin Montagu at Cambridge - 28 Feb. 1912; The Rt. Hon. Mr. E.S.Montagu on Indian Affairs, pp.295-312. Also see his speech in the Commons - 22 April 1912; 37, H.C.Debs., 5s, col.813.
3. Speech of Bonar Law - 22 April 1912; Ibid., col.787.
4. See above, pp.279-80.
5. Speech of Morley - 22 Feb. 1912; 11, H.L.Debs., 5s, cols. 229-31.
6. Speech of Lord Harris - 22 Feb. 1912; Ibid., col.203. Hardinge thought that the presence of the Sec. of State at the time of King's announcement made "the King's action perfectly constitutional". See Hardinge to Crewe - 15 Feb. 1912; H.P., Vol.118, U.L.C. To avoid further controversy, the provision for constituting the Presidency of Bengal was sought through the Act of 1854. See Crewe to Hardinge - 15 March 1912; Ibid. Also see J. & P. Dept., File 2285, Vol.1162 of 1912 & File 704/2285, Ibid. Also see Procs. 85-96 for March 1912, I.H.P. Delhi Procs. Vol.9849.

Even though the King had spoken to Lansdowne, Curzon and Minto and had pointed out "the damage to his dignity" if the changes announced by him were criticised in Parliament,<sup>1</sup> the three ex-Viceroy's condemned the durbar policy. Lansdowne said that the changes had been "accomplished by methods entirely unusual" and that the modification represented "the triumph of a very persistent and a very dangerous agitation".<sup>2</sup> Minto charged the Government with carrying out the policy without "consultation with a single soul in India outside the Viceroy's Council and without the advice of a single man in this country". He asserted that the British had disowned their pledged word which would "deprecate the reputation of British rule in India".<sup>3</sup> Similarly Curzon declared:

"You have yielded to a dying and ... factitious agitation; you have bitterly offended the Mahomedans and taught them that the word of the British Raj can be broken...".<sup>4</sup>

Hardinge, though perturbed at the criticism, especially that from Curzon, consoled himself by remarking that Curzon was "one of the greatest egoists" he knew,<sup>5</sup> and that he was so

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1. Stamfordham to Hardinge - 23 Feb. 1912; H.P., Vol.105, U.L.C.
  2. Speech of Lansdowne - 22 Feb. 1912; 11, H.L.Debs., 5s, cols.234-7.
  3. Speech of Minto - 22 Feb. 1912; Ibid., cols.189-95. In a letter to Butler, Minto called the changes "the most ruinous mistakes". He thought that it was mischievous to have involved the King who was "merely pitied as having been put in an unjustifiable position". See Minto to Butler - 14 April 1912; Minto Papers, Box 3. Series 3.230. Also see Minto to Lady Cable - 10 Jan. 1912; Ibid., Box 4. Series 2.226. In this letter Minto wrote that the agitation against the partition was a "got up concern" and that the feelings against it had been "absolutely dead" before he left India.
  4. Speech of Curzon - 21 Feb. 1912; 11, H.L.Debs., 5s, cols.137-88.
  5. Hardinge to Crewe - 14 March 1912; H.P., Vol.118, U.L.C.

detested throughout India and especially in Bengal that "his unpopularity reduced the evil effects of his speech".<sup>1</sup> The King also deprecated Curzon's speech and considered his story about the Nawab of Dacca "personally offensive to himself".<sup>2</sup>

It is however evident that the changes had not been carried out for their own sake. The King admitted to Lansdowne what Hardinge was reluctant to disclose, that "he had felt that his visit must be marked by some great boon to the people and none of the proposals made to him seemed to him adequate to the occasion".<sup>3</sup> This apparently referred to the boon of a crore of rupees which Hardinge had failed to receive from the British Government.

To the Muslim community which had been time and again assured of the permanence of the partition, the administrative changes came as a rude shock. They had been carried out in

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1. Hardinge to King - 26 March 1912; Ibid., Vol.105. Also see Hardinge to Stamfordham - 12 March 1912; Ibid. Later, Hardinge compared Curzon to "a bear with a sore head" on account of the modification of the partition. See Hardinge to Crewe - 15 Aug. 1912; Ibid., Vol.118. Crewe was also sad at Curzon's speech and commented that Curzon was capable of "putting his foot into a morass of which nine stupid people out of ten would keep clear". See Crewe to Hardinge - 29 Feb. 1912; Ibid.
  2. Crewe to Hardinge - 23 Feb. 1912; Ibid. Also see Stamfordham to Hardinge - 23 Feb. 1912; & King to Hardinge - 8 March 1912; Ibid., Vol.105. Curzon in his speech had said that the Nawab took the ribbon of decoration as a halter with which he was to hang himself. Technically the story was wrong as the Nawab was decorated on 18 March 1912 - after Curzon had made the speech. See Hardinge's diary - 22 Feb. & 18 March 1912; H.C., Vp3, K.A.O. Curzon based the story on a communication from Suhrawardy. See below, p.306.
  3. Chamberlain to Mrs. Mary Chamberlain - 14 Feb. 1912; Austen Chamberlain Papers, University Library, Birmingham. The King also told Lansdowne that he thought that the partition was a mistake and had urged Morley and his ministers to undo it after his first visit to India but his advice was not accepted. Now that it was undone, he took full responsibility for it as a constitutional monarch. See Chamberlain to Mrs. Mary Chamberlain - 13 Feb. 1912; Ibid.

complete disregard of Muslim public opinion and in secrecy. The Comrade was constrained to remark:

"It makes one doubt whether we are living in the twentieth century under the aegis of the British Democracy or in the fourteenth under erratic Tughlak". 1

The paper wrote that for the Hindus of Bengal, the measure was a "matter of give and take"; for the Biharis, it was one of "take" and for the loyal Muslims of East Bengal it had been one of nothing but "give".<sup>2</sup> The Muhammadi found the Muslims "thoughtful and morose". As "from evil cometh good", so the Muslims, the paper hoped, would now be able to open their eyes to realities.<sup>3</sup> On 24 December 1911, the leaders of the community held a meeting and passed a resolution to change their future policy.<sup>4</sup> This was not surprising as the moral which the Muslims derived from the changes was: "No agitation, no concession".<sup>5</sup>

But the Viceroy had apprehended no serious opposition from the Muslims. He thought that the Nawab of Dacca who was "hopelessly in debt to the Government of India" and had been recommended for an honour would cause no trouble.<sup>6</sup> A day before the announcement by the King, Hardinge had written a letter to the Nawab congratulating him on the "signal honour" conferred upon him, hoping that he and his flock would loyally accept the decision of the Government, and assuring him that the interests of the Muslims would be safeguarded.<sup>7</sup> The "most

1. The Comrade (Calcutta) - 16 Dec. 1911; B.N.N.R., No.51.

2. Ibid.

3. The Muhammadi - 22 Dec. 1911; Ibid., No.52.

The Nayak reported that the Muslims of Mymensingh pulled down a gateway with portraits of the King and Queen. See the Nayak - 23 Dec. 1911; Ibid. The paper also reported that on the occasion of the Royal visit to Calcutta, the Muslims did not illuminate their houses. See the Nayak - 11 Jan. 1912; Ibid., No.3

4. The Bihar Bandhu - 6 Jan. 1912; Ibid., No.2.

5. The Musulman - 12 Feb. 1912; Ibid., No.3.

6. Hardinge to Crewe - 24 Aug. 1911; H.P., Vol.113, U.L.C.  
On the loan given to Nawab see Apendix C.

7. Hardinge to Nawab Salimullah - 11 Dec. 1911; H.P., Vol.82. U.L.C.

loyal and sincere subject" as the Nawab called himself in a letter to Hardinge promised

"to induce those Mahommedans who may have heard the Royal Proclamation with a feeling of discouragement to put our loyalty to our Sovereign before all other considerations, and to understand that it is their bounden duty as loyal subjects of His Imperial Majesty to accept his pronouncement without question". 1

In spite of Nawab Salimullah's promise of loyalty, the Muslims felt that they had been abandoned by the Government. As Carlyle pointed out, the transfer of the capital to Delhi could not be a sop to the Muslim community of East Bengal.<sup>2</sup> For the Government of East Bengal and Assam, the situation turned out to be "one of considerable difficulty".<sup>3</sup> Even Hardinge admitted that the Muslims were sore and had cause for complaint against the changes.<sup>4</sup>

In order to soothe Muslim opinion, towards the end of January 1912, Hardinge decided to pay a visit to Dacca. He diplomatically asked the Lieutenant-Governor to arrange the presentation of an address by the Muslims.<sup>5</sup> While in Dacca, Hardinge was given an enthusiastic reception and was gratified to find nothing disagreeable except the mosquitos.<sup>6</sup> He received a deputation of the Muslims<sup>7</sup> and recommended the appointment

1. Nawab Salimullah to Hardinge - 17 Dec. 1911; Ibid.
2. Carlyle to Hardinge - 28 Dec. 1911; Ibid.
3. Bayley to Hardinge - 2 Jan. 1912; Ibid., Vol.83. Also see Lieutenant-Governor, E.B. & A. to Gov-Gen. - 31 Dec. 1911; (Telegram), Ibid., Vol.82.
4. Hardinge to Errington - 4 Jan. 1912; & Hardinge to Reay - 9 Jan. 1912; Ibid., Vol.92.
5. Gov-Gen. - to Lieutenant-Governor, E.B. & A. - 30 Dec. 1911; (Telegram), Ibid., Vol.82. Also see Hardinge to Carmichael - 26 Jan. 1912; Ibid., Vol.83.
6. Hardinge's diary - 29 Jan. 1912; H.C., Vp3, K.A.O.
7. Ibid., 31 Jan. 1912.

of a Muslim on the Bengal Council<sup>1</sup> as well as of a separate educational officer and the creation of University at Dacca. He thought that the Muslims would "be more than satisfied with these concessions....".<sup>2</sup>

As seen earlier,<sup>the</sup> Nawab of Dacca, who had all along been a staunch supporter of the partition, had failed to lodge a protest with the Viceroy. He had not enough courage to take a strong stand and accepted the measure without protest at least in his communications with the Viceroy. This was probably because his mouth had been shut by the honour bestowed on him and also because of his monetary indebtedness to the Government. However, he overcame his timidity and trepidation in revealing his inner thoughts to Hare. At the time when he went to attend the Durbar at Delhi the Nawab was suffering from a carbuncle on his leg and in view of the rumours about the annulment of the partition he had drawn up a petition for submission to the King which he was advised to withhold. On 11 December 1912, when Hardinge broke the news to him, he was "so much hurt and disappointed" that he had "cardia fit" (presumably a mild heart attack) and fever. More carbuncles appeared on his leg and he returned to Dacca with great difficulty. Like a child who had not learnt to walk by himself he cried to Hare:

"Every one is sick and all officials and Moham-medans are very much indignant. The new beautiful town of Dacca is gone.... Great deal of money wasted and the beautiful grounds will grow into jungles and the nice houses will be haunted. The Mohammedans are gone backward again. They are ruined entirely.... The Hindus have now come in

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1. Shamshul Huda was appointed as the member. Since the appointment of a Muslim would have enraged the Hindus (See Crewe to Hardinge - 26 Feb. 1912; H.P., Vol.118.). Hardinge used the pretext of not retaining the Hindu member on the grounds that this member at a dinner at Calcutta Club fell under the table owing to intoxication and had to be carried away. See Hardinge to Chirol - 16 April 1912; Ibid., Vol. 92; Also see Hardinge to Crewe - 21 March 1912; Ibid., Vol.118.
  2. Hardinge to King - 2 Feb. 1912; Ibid., Vol.105. Also see Hardinge to Chirol - 24 Jan. 1912; Ibid., Vol.92 & Hardinge to Crewe - 25 Jan. 1912; Ibid., Vol.118.

power and they will use the same against Moham-medans. All my 6 years hard labour has gone and I am left broken hearted". 1

And yet the broken-hearted Nawab wrote about the honour given to him as more than he deserved as it was "the highest distinction a zamindar" could get.<sup>2</sup>

The comments of other Muslim leaders were more expressive. Ameer Ali sent a letter to Curzon from "a very influential and thoughtful" Muslim leader from Upper India who wrote that after the recent changes one could hardly regard any action of the government as a "settled fact" and that there was no guarantee that other pledges given to the Muslims would not be broken. In view of the British Government not being "strong enough to withstand agitation" the writer asked whether the Muslims should not modify their present policy.<sup>3</sup>

A.Al Ma'mun Suhrawardy, a member of the Bengal Legislative Council, explaining the attitude of the Muslims, wrote to Curzon that the Muslims had shown "remarkable self-restraint" though the Government had done "them wrong by straining their loyalty almost to the breaking point". The honour to the Nawab, he pointed out, was taken by the Muslims as a "bribe" and the Nawab deemed it as a Tawq-i-Lanat (a collar of disgrace). Suhrawardy continued:

"If we are silent & less vocal our silence is the silence of anger & sorrow & not that of acquiescence. In proportion to our devotion to the person & Throne of His Majesty is the intensity of our resentment at the cowardly device of putting the Announcement in the mouth

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1. Nawab Salimullah to Hare - 2 Jan. 1912; Encl. in Hare to Curzon of 24 Jan. 1912; C.C. Vol.434.
  2. Ibid. Also see Bourdillon to Curzon - 31 Jan. 1912; Ibid., para.7. Subsequently, the Nawab publicly criticised the Delhi announcement at the Annual Session of the All India Muslim League held on 3 & 4 March 1912 in the Calcutta Town Hall. See Govt. of Bengal to Govt. of India - 19 March 1912; J. & P. Dept., File 1224/945, Vol.1139 of 1912, L.No. 3172-P, para.4.
  3. Encl. in Ameer Ali to Curzon - 18 Feb. 1912; C.C., Vol.434.



of the King-Emperor & thus muzzling us effectively. The glamour of the Durbar is fast fading away from our memories, but the bitterness aroused by the Announcement will linger long in our hearts. The transfer of the Capital is not only the uprooting of traditions of 150 years of British rule. It may be, God forbid, the uprooting of the British Raj".

Suhrawardy concluded:

"... if the much-criticised autocracy of your Lordship was the benevolent autocracy of the Moghul, the autocracy of Lord Hardinge is the Russian autocracy of the Tsar". 1

There was a change for the worse in the Muslim feeling towards the Government. The faith which the Muslims had reposed in the British received a shattering blow. Even Minto could not apprehend how, "after absolutely refusing for six years to re-open the question", the British Raj could "with any self respect eat everything" it had said.<sup>2</sup> A Government report described the feeling of the Muslims thus:

"Grave discontent was aroused among the Muhammadans of East Bengal over the modification of the Partition...". They "believed that their material interests would suffer by the changes and to this was added the feeling that their loyalty had been ill-requited by the Government. Further the Muhammadans felt that it was largely their own weakness and want of organisation which had enabled the Hindus to triumph at their expense...". "... amongst educated Muhammadans the attitude towards Government is still of distrust and watchfulness...".<sup>3</sup>

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1. Surrawardy to Curzon - 28 Feb. 1912; Ibid. Ameer Ali had also written in the same tone. Referring to the change of the capital he observed that it read "more like a chapter from Pathan or Mogul history than of Modern times... even Pathan and Mogul Sovereigns paid some regard to public opinion, and did not depend entirely on *expôst factô* approval". See Ameer Ali to Curzon - 4 Jan. 1912; Ibid.
  2. Minto to Butler - 14 April 1912; Minto Papers, Box 3. Series.3.230.
  3. Govt. of Bengal to Govt. of India - 29 Oct. 1912; I.H.Pol. Procs., 1913, Vol.9211, Proc. 51 for March 1913.

In the circumstances, a community hitherto loyal seemed to drift away from its weary path of loyalty. Leaders like Ameer Ali and the Agha Khan were forced to leave the Muslim League, giving place to men of radical views.<sup>1</sup> The Government had to use "the strongest pressure public & private to prevent trouble" amongst the Muslims.<sup>2</sup> Were it not for the Nawab of Dacca, wrote Bayley, Lieutenant-Governor of Bihar and Orissa, to Curzon, the Muslims would possibly have broken out immediately and joined the Congress in a body. Bayley noted:

"The hopeful feature in the case is that the Hindu is never large-minded enough to forego a temporary advantage & is pretty sure before long to alienate his new friends by more egregious display of selfishness".<sup>3</sup>

Nevertheless there was a spirit of growing co-operation between the Muslim League and the Congress and Hardinge was unhappy to see the Muslims "playing up to Congress".<sup>4</sup> The war in Tripoli and the events in Persia further aggravated Muslim feeling towards the Government,<sup>5</sup> which grew to be anything

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1. Aziz, K.K., Britain and Muslim India, p.82. Also see Lovat Fraser to Curzon - 4 March 1912; C.C., Vol.434.
  2. Butler to Minto - 8 Aug. 1912; Minto Papers, Box.3.Series. 3.230.
  3. Bayley to Curzon - 22 Aug. 1912; C.C., Vol.434. Carmichael regarded the Nawab as "our best asset". See Carmichael to Hardinge - 1 June 1913; H.P., Vol.84, U.L.C.
  4. Hardinge to Chirol - 27 March 1913; Ibid., Vol.92. Also see Chirol to Hardinge - 24 Jan. 1912; Ibid.
  5. Chirol was alarmed at the change in the Muslim attitude and thought that the agitation about Tripoli and Persia was "an outward manifestation<sup>of</sup> than any essential cause". See Chirol to Hardinge - 15 Feb. 1912; H.P., Vol.92, U.L.C. Hardinge was not unhappy about the Turkish reversals, as a Turkish victory, in his opinion, would have made the Muslims more arrogant and in consequence they would have suffered from a "swelled head". See Hardinge to Crewe - 5 Nov. 1912; Ibid., Vol.118. Also see Hardinge to Butler - 13 Nov. 1912; Ibid., Vol.83. Crewe was of the opinion that the Turkish and Persian affairs had neutralised the good effect of the King's visit on the Muslims and "to have made them to overrate the loss of Eastern Bengal and underrate the merit of the move to Delhi". See Crewe to Hardinge - 15 Aug. 1912; Ibid., Vol.118.

but friendly.<sup>1</sup>

The effect of the policy initiated by Hardinge is however not to be judged from its immediate and narrower aspect of alienating the Muslims alone but in the wider context of its effect on the future course of events. On the one hand it shattered Muslim faith in the promises of the British, on the other it taught a lesson to the Indians that agitation could succeed. Hitherto the Government could lean on the support of the Muslims; from now onwards the trust was gone as the Government had itself rewarded loyalty with betrayal and "sedition with concession". Whereas it took more than twenty years for a well-established and older organisation like the Congress to demand self-government, the Muslim League within six years of its nascent life resolved in 1912-1913 in favour of "self-government suited to India".<sup>2</sup> Whereas in the past the Muslim League and the Congress had gone two different ways, for the time being the two pulled together, formed an entente by the famous Lucknow Pact of 1916 and presented a formidable joint front in the Khilafat agitation.<sup>3</sup> Even when the two organizations did not work in harmony, their common aim was to force the hands of the British to grant them maximum concessions. Though the annulment of the partition was by no means the only factor responsible for this, it did much to show the Indians the way to obtain the redress of their grievances through agitation.

The Government of India's efforts to negate any presumption that the modification was the result of agitation met scanty success. The reunion was regarded as a "memorable triumph of constitutional agitation".<sup>4</sup> The rakhi festival, the boycott celebrations and the fasting ceremonies of the past

1. Carmichael to Hardinge - 1 June 1913. Ibid., Vol.84.

2. Butler to Minto - 12 Jan. 1913. Minto Papers, Box.3.Series. 3.230.

3. Aziz, op.cit., p.85.

4. The Bengalee - 14 Dec. 1911. Also see the Hindoo Patriot of 14 Dec. 1911; B.N.N.R., No.51 of 1911.

few years were said to have justified themselves.<sup>1</sup> The Hitavadi could not help blessing the young men of Bengal for having achieved the goal for which they had fought.<sup>2</sup> The Bengalee echoed that the people after the recent experience should keep faith in agitation "as the royal road to the redress of national grievances..."<sup>3</sup> The Comrade wrote that even a schoolboy knew that it was "clamour and agitation" which brought about the modification of the partition.<sup>4</sup> Thus the Bengalis regarded the annulment of the partition not as a royal favour but the outcome of the struggle which they had put up against the Government.

Moreover the modification of the partition hardly succeeded in achieving the results anticipated by Hardinge - the Bengalis were not conciliated and the Muslims were not satisfied. Further, the peace and quiet which Hardinge had hoped to bestow on Bengal did not follow from the changes. Only temporary peace at a heavy cost was the result. Soon Hardinge started worrying. Like some of his predecessors he asked Carmichael to be careful and "to sit very tight" while dealing with the Bengalis whom he described as "far more clever and very unscrupulous".<sup>5</sup> Hardinge could not afford to be "over-sanguine" about the situation, as he realised that agitation was "the breath to Bengalis" and they were sure "to find some excuse before long".<sup>6</sup> He had witnessed the agitation over the question of Dacca University, the creation of a separate High Court for Bihar and Orissa, and the redistribution of the territories. His new friends had betrayed him. He was to witness the recrudescence of dacoities and murders in Bengal.

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1. The Joshar - 16 Dec. 1911; Ibid.
  2. The Hitavadi - 22 Dec. 1911; Ibid.
  3. The Bengalee - 29 Dec. 1911. Also see Bengalee of 26 Dec. 1911.
  4. The Comrade - 23 Dec. 1911; B.N.N.R., No.2.
  5. Hardinge to Carmichael - 26 March 1912; H.P. Vol.83; U.L.C. Also see Hardinge to Chirol - 27 March 1912; Ibid., Vol.92.
  6. Hardinge to Crewe - 5 Sept. 1912; Ibid., Vol.118.

In his book Hardinge recorded that after the King's visit "absolute peace had prevailed" for about a year and that not a single political murder had taken place.<sup>1</sup> The official summary of his administration tells a somewhat different story - "Dacoities still continued in Bengal but were less numerous than in other years".<sup>2</sup> In July 1912, there was an attack on the police in Assam; the Mohunt of Sitakund was murdered at Chittagong. The "seditious" party in Bengal came into prominence once again. In September 1912, a constable was shot dead at Dacca, in November a serious political dacoity occurred in that city and a bomb was thrown into the house of an informer at Midnapore. On 23 December 1912, on the occasion of the Viceroy's state entry into Delhi, a bomb was thrown which seriously injured Hardinge, killed an attendant and wounded another.<sup>3</sup>

Hardinge started re-writing his notes to prove that he had "always foreseen trouble...".<sup>4</sup> To Lovat Fraser, he wrote that the murders and dacoities had made him realise that "all was not well in Bengal" and therefore he had embarked on modification.<sup>5</sup> Even if Hardinge's plea in favour of the undoing of the partition, on the grounds of unrest in Bengal be accepted, he failed to change the conditions and was confronted with the same trouble. He found the conspiracy ramifying over large areas in the re-united province, and he thought that it aimed at rendering the Government ineffectual and promoting revolution.<sup>6</sup> He witnessed the character of the dacoities

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1. Hardinge, op.cit., p.79.

2. Summary of the Administration of the Government of India, 1910-16, p.15, H.P., U.L.C.

3. Ibid., p.16.

4. Butler to Minto - 12 Jan. 1913; Minto Papers, Box.3.Series. 3.230.

5. Hardinge to Lovat Fraser - 12 May 1912; H.P., Vol.92.U.L.C. To Carmichael he wrote that they were felonies. See Hardinge to Carmichael - 25 July 1912; Ibid., Vol.83.

6. Hardinge to Carmichael - 27 March 1913; Ibid., Vol.84.

growing worse<sup>1</sup> resulting in "complete anarchy".<sup>2</sup> As he had previously blamed the administrators of the two Bengals for maladministration, so he now attributed the bad state of affairs in Bengal to the "passive" policy of Carmichael, the Governor of re-united Bengal, and his "campaign of soft words". Referring to Carmichael's administration, Hardinge wrote:

"I do not think, however, that popularity is gained or maintained by weakness".<sup>3</sup>

Hardinge did not realise that the same remark could aptly apply to the policy he had hitherto pursued.

The fact of the matter is that Hardinge had miscalculated the situation. He had failed to realise that at the time he took over, the basic problem in the two Bengals, was one not of political agitation alone. The root of the trouble, in fact was the absence of effective administration at the district level. Craddock, the Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces, rightly pointed out that Curzon recognised the maladministration in Bengal when he partitioned it but the weak point of his partition, "which has of necessity not been remedied by the recent distribution was that, while authorities were multiplied at the top, the district administration ... was left untouched".<sup>4</sup> The unrest continued. The King, the har-binger of temporary peace, was disturbed at the bad news from East Bengal and was obliged to ask the Viceroy to send troops there.<sup>5</sup> They were posted towards the end of 1913 to put an end to terrorism.<sup>6</sup>

Thus the administrative changes proved a child of dubious parentage, born, nursed and weaned in the chambers of

1. Ibid., 22 April 1913.

2. Hardinge to Sydenham - 14 March 1913; Ibid. Also see Hardinge to Craddock - 27 March 1913; Ibid.

3. Hardinge to Montagu - 27 March 1913; H.P., Vol.92, U.L.C.

4. Craddock to Hardinge - 27 April 1913; Ibid., Vol.84.

5. King to Hardinge - 18 May 1913; Ibid., Vol.105.

6. See Procs. 52-8 for Nov. 1913, I.H. Pol.Procs., 1913, Vol.9211.

the Viceroy and the Secretary of State, both of whom laid claim to its paternity. It was finally thrown into the lap of the King, in order to make up for the lack of initial expert care and advice which it had been refused at all the stages of its forced growth. When it came before the public, they welcomed it on account of its association with royalty, but soon found that it was sickly and malformed. Its ill health continued and the Government had to administer heavy doses of expensive drugs in order to remedy chronic symptoms of disease, but to little purpose, for even the symptoms revealed only a fraction of the deep-seated malady that afflicted the body politic of Bengal.

### Conclusion

The details of the various schemes prepared to ease the administrative burden of Bengal make it very clear that no single individual, not even the masterful Curzon, can claim sole authorship. Moreover, the long discussions of successive schemes reveal no less clearly that each individual who took some part in them was moved by a variety of considerations, whose relative weight it may be difficult to assess, but of whose multiplicity there is no doubt. Personal jealousies, hopes of preferment, concern for the health and pleasure of service colleagues played their part alongside balancings of administrative and economic gain and political danger. That partition emerged in the form it did can be seen to be the result of a most complex process, very far removed from the simple Bengali clamour against divide and rule or from ~~the~~ equally simple claim that the measure was based purely on the need to ease the task of administrators.

Again, though it has not been the aim of this thesis to analyse the agitation against partition in any depth, nor to study the growing nationalism in Bengal and elsewhere, it is clear that the picture of Congress united in the struggle to undo Curzon's blunder or crime is very far from true or complete. There were vigorous provincial antipathies at work within committees, <sup>and these</sup> ~~which worked against a movement that placed~~ <sup>in favour of</sup> local <sup>as</sup> against national interests. Even those Bengalis who sought to use a national platform for their provincial ends, can be seen pouring scorn on Assamese and Oriyas, and while claiming that Bengali speakers should be united can be seen resisting every suggestion that the Biharis should be lost to Bengal. Nor was it long before the extremism with which the Boycott and Swadeshi movements were pursued led to a re-assessment of the wisdom of the agitation by the Moderates. Well before 1911 the original supporters of the protest



against partition had in great measure changed their minds.

As for the annulment of the partition, the picture of statesmen pushed by rather than directing events can rarely have been clearer. The fate of millions of Bengalis, Biharis, Oriyas and Assamese ultimately turned upon the outcome of the search for a boon. If Curzon's partition was the cause of unrest in Bengal, its revocation failed to conciliate the Bengalis and left the Muslims bitter.

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1867

Vol. 10.

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Vol. 11.

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Vol. 26.

13. POLITICAL DESPATCHES TO INDIA1871

Vol. 14.

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14. COLLECTION TO DESPATCHES1866

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Appendix A

List of Native owned Vernacular Newspapers received and dealt  
with by the Bengal Special Branch in 1905

No.	Name of Newspapers	Places of Publication	Reported number of subscribers
<b>BENGALI</b>		<b>CALCUTTA</b>	
<b>Monthly</b>			
1	"Dharma-o-Karma" ...	Calcutta... ..	.....
2	"Prachar" ...	Bhowanipore, Calcutta	.....
<b>Fortnightly</b>			
1	"Islam Alam"... ..	Calcutta... ..	.....
2	"Sign Board"... ..	Ditto ... ..	500
<b>Weekly</b>			
1	"Anusandhan" ...	Calcutta... ..	1,200
2	"Bangabhumii" ...	Ditto ... ..	1,400
3	"Bangavasi" ...	Ditto ... ..	9,000
4	"Basumati" ...	Ditto ... ..	13,000
5	"Hitavadi" ...	Ditto ... ..	16,000
6	"Hindustan" ...	Ditto ... ..	.....
7	"Mahakhali Patrika" ...	Ditto ... ..	.....
8	"Mohammadi" ...	Ditto ... ..	.....
9	"Mihir-o-Sudhakar" ...	Ditto ... ..	1,000
10	"Mistabhasi" ...	Ditto ... ..	300
11	"Nava Yug" ...	Ditto ... ..	500
12	"Navavarta" ...	Ditto ... ..	.....
13	"Pratijna" ...	Ditto ... ..	700
14	"Samay" ...	Ditto ... ..	800
15	"Sanjivani" ...	Ditto ... ..	3,200
16	"Soltan" ...	Ditto ... ..	.....
17	"Somprakash" ...	Ditto ... ..	.....
18	"Sri Sri Vishnu Priya-o-Ananda Bazar Patrika"	Ditto ... ..	1,000
<b>Daily</b>			
1	"Dainik Chandrika" ...	Calcutta... ..	200
2	"Samvad Purnachand- rodaya"	Ditto ... ..	400
3	"Samvad Prabhakar" ...	Ditto ... ..	.....
4	"Sandhya" ...	Ditto ... ..	.....
<b>ENGLISH AND BENGALI</b>			
<b>Daily</b>			
1	"Daily Hitavadi" ...	Calcutta... ..	.....



No.	Name of Newspapers	Places of Publication	Reported number of subscribers
HINDI			
Weekly			
1	"Bharat Mittra" ...	Calcutta... ..	3,200
2	"Hindi Bangavasi" ...	Ditto ... ..	3,000
3	"Hitavarta"... ..	Ditto ... ..	3,000
PERSIAN			
Weekly			
1.	"Roznama-i-Mukaddas-Hablul Mateen"	Calcutta... ..	1,000
BENGALI			
Weekly			
1.	"Banga Darpan" ...	Chinsura ... ..	.....
2	"Bankura Darpan" ...	Bankura ... ..	1,156
3	"Birbhum Varta" ...	Birbhum ... ..	.....
4	"Burdwan Sanjivani"...	Burdwan ... ..	400
5	"Chinsura Vartavaha"...	Chinsura ... ..	650
6	"Education Gazette" ...	Ditto ... ..	1,750
7	"Howrah Hitaishi" ...	Howrah ... ..	200
8	"Medini Bandhav" ...	Midnapore ... ..	400
9	"Nihar" ... ..	Contai ... ..	300
10	"Pallivasi" ... ..	Kalna ... ..	350
11	"Prasun" ... ..	Katwa ... ..	.....
12	"Ratnakar" ... ..	Asanol ... ..	750
13	"Uluberia Darpan" ...	Uluberia ... ..	.....
BENGALI			
Monthly			
1	"Sevika" ... ..	Diamond Harbour...	.....
Weekly			
1	"Hitasadhak" ... ..	Alipore ... ..	300
2	"Jasohar" ... ..	Jessore ... ..	1,600
3	"Khulna" ... ..	Khulna ... ..	500
4	"Khulnavasi"... ..	Khulna ... ..	.....
5	"Krishnanagar" ... ..	Krishnagar ... ..	.....
6	"Murshidabad Hit-aishi" ... ..	Khagra ... ..	375
7	"Pratikar" ... ..	Berhampore ... ..	607
URIYA			
Weekly			
1	"Garjatbasini" ... ..	Talcher ... ..	.....
2	"Samvad Vahika" ... ..	Balasore ... ..	300
3	"Star of Utkal" ... ..	Cuttack ... ..	.....
4	"Uriya and Navasamvad"	Ditto ... ..	500
5	"Utkaldipika" ... ..	Ditto ... ..	500

No.	Name of Newspapers	Places of Publication	Reported Number of Subscribers
HINDI			
	Weekly		
1	"Jagadis Samachar" ...	Puri ... ..	.....
	Monthly	PATNA DIVISION	
1	"Lakshmi Upadesh Lahri" ...	Aurangabad, Gaya...	.....
	Fortnightly		
1	"Bihar Bandhu" ...	Bankipore ...	600
2	"Jain Gajat" ...	Arrah ... ..	500
	Weekly		
1	"Siksha" ... ..	Bankipore ...	.....
URDU			
	Weekly		
1	"Al Punch" ... ..	Bankipore ...	545
BENGALI			
	Weekly	BHAGALPUR DIVISION	
1	"Maldaha Samachar" ...	Malda ... ..	.....
	BENGALI	CHOTA NAGPUR DIVISION	
	Weekly		
1	"Manbhum" ... ..	Purulia ... ..	400
2	"Purulia Darpan" ...	Ditto ... ..	.....
HINDI			
	Fortnightly		
1	"Ghar Bandhu" ...	Ranchi ... ..	.....
	Weekly		
1	"Arya Varta" ... ..	Ranchi ... ..	510
BENGALI			
	Weekly	RAJSHAHI DIVISION	
1	"Hindu Ranjika" ...	Boalia ... ..	225
2	"Pabna Hitaishi" ...	Pabna ... ..	.....
3	"Rangpur Dik Prakash" ...	Rangpur ... ..	7,480
4	"Rangpur Vartavaha" ...	Ditto ... ..	800
5	"Swadesh Hitaishi" ...	Ditto ... ..	.....
BENGALI			
	Monthly	DACCA DIVISION	
1	"Gaurab" ... ..	Dacca ... ..	.....
	Fortnightly		
1	"Faridpur Hitaishini" ...	Faridpur ...	500
2	"Goalundo Suhrid" ...	Pangsa ... ..	.....
3	"Santi" ... ..	Madaripur ...	500

No.	Name of Newspapers	Places of Publication	Reported number of Subscribers
BENGALI			
Weekly			
1	"Barisal Hitaishi" ...	Barisal ...	400
2	"Charu Mihir" ...	Mymensingh ...	1,000
3	"Dacca Prakash" ...	Dacca ...	500
4	"Kasipur Nivasi" ...	Barisal ...	500
5	"Purba Banga" ...	Dacca ...	.....
6	"Swadeshi" ...	Barisal ...	.....
7	"Swadesh Sampad" ...	Mymensingh ...	.....
ENGLISH AND BENGALI			
Weekly			
1	"Dacca Gazette" ...	Dacca ...	600
BENGALI CHITTAGONG DIVISION			
Tri-monthly			
1	"Suhrid" ...	Noakhali ...	500
Weekly			
1	"Arun" ...	Agartala ...	.....
2	"Hitavarta" ...	Muradnagar ...	300
3	"Jyoti" ...	Chittagong ...	700 to 800
4	"Sansodhini" ...	Ditto ...	300 to 500
5	"Tripura Hitaishi" ...	Comilla ...	720
ENGLISH AND BENGALI			
Weekly			
1	"Pratinidhi" ...	Comilla ...	400
BENGALI ASSAM			
Fortnightly			
1	"Paridarsak" ...	Sylhet ...	500
2	"Silchar" ...	Silchar ...	.....

List of Native owned Vernacular Newspapers received and dealt  
with by the Bengal Special Branch in 1909

No.	Name of Newspapers	Places of Publication	Edition	Name, caste and age of Editor	Circulation
BENGALI					
1	"Anusilan"	Calcutta	Weekly	....	
2	"Bangabandhu"	Ditto	Do.	Barendro Lall Mukerjee,	1,000
3	"Bangabhumi"	Ditto	Do.	age 27, Hindu. (Gets contributions from different writers. <del>No. 3</del> )	500
4	"Bangaratna"	Ranaghat	Do.	Kanai Lal Das, age 25, Karmokar	100
5	"Bangavasi"	Calcutta	Do.	Behari Lal Sarkar, age 52, Kayastha; Hari Mohan Mukerji, age 41, Brahmin; and Durga Das Lahiri.	15,000
6	"Bankura Darpan"	Bankura	Do.	Bissonath Mukerji, B.L.	713
7	"Basumati"	Calcutta	Do.	Radhika Prosad Ghose, age 37, Hindu	13,000
8	"Bharat Chitra"	Ditto	Do.	....	
9	Birbhum Hitaishi"	Suri	Do.	Rajranjan Sen, age 34, Baidya	300
10	"Birbhum Varta"	Ditto	Do.	Debendra Nath Chakravarti, age 36, Brahmin	800
11	"Burdwan Sanjivani"	Burdwan	Do.	Probadha Nanda Sarkar	950
12	"Chinsura Vartavaha"	Chinsura	Do.	Dinanth Mukerji, age 42, Brahmin	650
13	"Daily Hitavadi"	Calcutta	Daily	....	
14	"Dainik Chandrika"	Ditto	Do.	Hari Dass Dutt, age 37, Kayastha.	200
15	"Dharma-o-Karma"	Ditto	Monthly	....	
16	"Education Gazette"	Chinsura	Weekly	Shibnath Bannerji, M.A. B.L.	1,500
17	"Ekata"	Calcutta	Do.	Nafur Chandra Sarkar, age 35, Kayastha	1,250
18	"Hitavadi"	Ditto	Do.	Jaladhar Sen, age 46, Hindu, Jogendra Kumar Chatterjee of Chandragore, and Manindranath Bose of Chitta.	30,000
19	"Hindusthan"	Ditto	Do.	Hari Das Dutt, age 37, Kayastha	1,000
20	"Howrah Hitaishi"	Howrah	Do.	Gishpaty Kabytirtha, age 36, Kayastha.	3,500

No.	Name of Newspapers	Places of Publication	Edition	Name, caste and age of Editor	Circulation
21	"Jagaran"	Bagerhat	Weekly	Behari Lal Roy, age 45, Kayastha; Beni Madhab Ganguly, age 35, Brahmin; and Monmotha Nath Roy, age 32, Brahmin.	600
22	"Jasohar"	Jessore	Do.	Ananda Mohan Chaudhury, age 34, Kayastha.	500
23	"Kalyani"	Magura	Do.	Biseswar Mukherjee, age 45, Brahmin; and Tarak Brahma Sikdar, Kayastha.	1,200
24	"Khulnavasi"	Khulna	Do.	Gopal Chandra Mukerjee, age 50, Brahmin.	300
25	"Manbhum"	Purulia	Do.	Bagola Chandra Ghosh, age 36, Kayastha.	300
26	"Matribhumi"	Chandernagore	Do.	Surendra Nath Sen, age 32, Hindu.	500
27	"Mihir-o-Sudhakar"	Calcutta	Do.	Sayyid Osman of Basirhat, age 35; and Maulvi Reyazuddin Ahmad of Kareya.	4,000
28	"Murshidabad Hitaishi"	Saidabad	Do.	Bonwari Lal Goswami, age 44, Brahmin.	100
29	"Nadia"	Krishnagar	Do.	Susil Kumar Maitra, age 28, Brahmin.	800
30	"Navajivani-o-Swadeshi Christian"	Calcutta	Tri-Weekly	Revd. Lall Behari Shah, age 50, Native Christian.	300
31	"Nayak"	Ditto	Daily and Bi-Weekly	Panch Kowri Banerji	500
32	"Nihar"	Contai	Weekly	Madhu Sudhan Jana age 49	200
33	"Nivedan"	Calcutta	Do.		
34	"Pallivarta"	Bongong	Do.	Charu Ch. Roy, age 35, Kayastha	400
35	"Pallivasi"	Kalna	Do.	Sosi Bhusan Banerji, age 42, Brahmin	600
36	"Prachar"	Calcutta	Monthly		

No.	Name of Newspapers	Places of Publication	Edition	Name, caste and age of Editor	Circulation
37	"Prasun"	Katwa	Weekly	Purna Chandra Chatterji age 43, and Banku Behari age 38, Goala.	500
38	"Pratihar"	Berhampore	Do.	Kamakhyia Prosad Ganguli, age 60, Brahmin	100
39	"Prava"	Calcutta	Do.	Mahendra Nath Chakravarti, age 39, Brahmin.	300
40	"Prabhat"	Ditto	Do.	Sailendra Nath Chatterji, age 26, Brahmin	300
41	"Purulia Darpan"	Purulia	Do.	Amulya Ratan Chatterjee, age 37, Brahmin.	300
42	"Ratnakar"	Asansol	Do.	Rakhal Chandra Chakravarti, age 26, Brahmin; and Gopal Chandra Mittra, age 6, Kayastha.	500
43	"Samaj Darpan"	Salkia	Do.	Satya Charan Banerjee, age 28, Brahmin.	1,300
44	"Samay"	Calcutta	Do.	Ganendra Nath Das, age 54, Brahmin	800
45	"Sammilani"	Serampore	Do.		
46	"Samvad Purnachandrodaya"	Calcutta	Daily	Purna Chandra Ghattak, age 45, Brahmin	50
47	"Sandhya"	Calcutta	Do.		7,000
48	"Sanjivani"	Ditto	Weekly	Shiva Nath Sastri and Ramamanda Chatterjee.	
49	"Sevika"	Diamond Harbour	Monthly		
50	"Soltan"	Calcutta	Weekly	Moulvi Muhammad Monirazzam of Chittagong.	1,500
51	"Sonar Bharat"	Howrah	Do.	Baikunta Das Gupta, age 35, Baidya	3,000
52	"Sri Sri Vishnu Priya-o-Ananda-Bazar Patrika"	Calcutta	Do.	Rasik Mohan Chakravarti, age 37, Brahmin.	2,000
53	"Swadesh"	Ditto	Do.	S. C. Lahiri, Pat. Lovett and Pundit Baijnath Bidyanidhi.	500

No.	Name of Newspapers	Places of Publication	Edition	Name, caste and age of Editor	Circulation
54	"Tamalika"	Tamluk	Weekly	Sita Nath Mondal, age 26, Hindu.	900
55	"Twenty-four Parganas Vartavaha"	Bhawanipur	Do.	Hem Chandra Nag, age 26, Kayastha	500
HINDI					
56	"Bharat Mitra"	Calcutta	Weekly	Mahabir Prosad, age 35, Vaisya; and Amrito Lal Chakravarti, age 46, Brahmin.	3,200
57	"Bihar Bandhu"	Bankipore	Do.	Nanda Kumar Sharma, age 35, Kayastha.	500
58	"Bihar Gazette"	Ditto	Do.	Muhammad Murad Ali Khan, age 42, Kayastha.	250
59	"Bir Bharat"	Calcutta	Do.	Prantosh Dutta, age 35, Kayastha.	500
60	"Ghar Bandhu"	Ranchi	Fortnightly	Rev. E. Muller, Superintendent, G.E. L. Mission, Ranchi.	1,000
61	"Gyanoday"	Calcutta	Monthly	....	
62	"Jain Gajat"	Arrah	Weekly	Printed and Published in the United provinces.	
63	"Jain Pataka"	Calcutta	Monthly	....	
64	"Hindi Bangavasi"	Ditto	Weekly	Hari Kissen Joahar, age 30, Khettri.	4,000
65	"Hitavarta"	Ditto	Do.	Rao Purandkar, age 29, Mahratta Brahmin.	3,000
66.	"Lakshmi Upadesh Lahri"	Gaya	Monthly	....	
67	"Marwari"	Calcutta	Do.	R.K. Tebrevala, age 34, Hindu Agarwalla.	500
68	"Marwari Bandhu"	Ditto	Weekly	....	
69	"Narsingha"	Ditto	Monthly	....	
70	"Siksha"	Bankipore	Weekly	Goadkaran Singh, age 38, Babhan	255

No.	Name of Newspapers	Places of Publication	Edition	Name, caste and age of Editor	Circulation
PERSIAN					
71	"Roznania-i-Mukaddas Hablul Matin"	Calcutta	Weekly	....	
URDU					
72	"Ayini-i-chatar Gupt"	Bankipore	Do.	....	
73	"Al Panch"	Ditto	Do.	....	
74	"Dar-ul Sultanat"	Calcutta	Do.	Quazi Abdul Latif, age 35, Muhammadan	200
75	"Khawah Mokhab Panch"	Gaya	Do.	....	
URIYA					
76	"Garjatbasini"	Talcher	Do.	Bhagi Ruth Misra, age 40, Brahmin	
77	"Manorama"	Baripada	Do.	....	
78	"Nilachal Samachar"	Puri	Do.	Baidya Nath Singh, age 31, Punjabi	600
79	"Sambalpur Hitaishini"	Bamra	Do.	Dinabandhu Padhan	
80	"Samvad Vahika"	Balasore	Do.	Harish Chandra Sarkar, age 52, Sadgop.	500
81	"Uriya and Navasamvad"	Cuttack	Do.	Ram Tarak Sen, age 47, Tamuli	700
82	"Utkal Darpan"	Sambalpur	Do.	....	
83	"Utkal Dipika"	Cuttack	Do.	Gauri Sankar Roy, age 75	800
84	"Utkal Sakti"	Calcutta	Do.	....	
85	"Utkal Varta"	Ditto	Do.	Moni Lall Moherana, age 45, Hindu Karmokar	500



List of Native owned English Newspapers received and dealt with by the Bengal Special Branch in 1909 347

No.	Name of Newspapers	Place of Publication	Edition	Name, caste and age of Editor	Circulation
1	"Amrita Bazar Patrika"	Calcutta	Daily	K.P.Chatterji, age 45, Brahmin	4,000
2	"Behar Herald"	Patna	Weekly	Monmatha Nath Dey, age 40, Pleader of Bankipore	500
3	"Beharee"	Bankipore	Bi-Weekly	Sham Sankar Sahai, Pleader and P.P. Sharma of Muzaffarpur	750
4	"Bengalee"	Calcutta	Daily	S.N.Banerji, Kali Prasana Sen age 38, and Kali Nath Roy.	6,000
5	"Bihar"	Patna	Weekly	Kali Kumar Sinha, B.A., B.L., Pleader of Bankipore, age 35, Kayastha	Not known
6	"Hindoo Patriot"	Calcutta	Daily	Srish Chandra Sarvadhikari, age 40, and Koylash Ch.Kanjilal Pleader, Sealdah Small Cause Court	800
7	"Indian Empire"	Ditto	Weekly	Kesab Chandra Banerjee, B.A., age 45, Brahmin and Panchanon Mazumdar, age 35, Hindu Baidya	1,500
8	"Indian Mirror"	Ditto	Daily	Rai Norendra Nath Sen Bahadur, age 60, Head of the Mahabodi Society.	1,000
9	"Indian Nation"	Ditto	Weekly	N.N.Ghose, age 58, Bar-at-Law	500
10	"Indian Tit-Bits"	Ditto	Do.	Satis Ch. Mukerjee alias M. Suttie, age 27 Brahmin.	300
11	"Kayestha Messenger"	Gaya	Do.	Jugal Kishore, age 36, Kayastha	500
12	"Moslem Chronicle"	Calcutta	Do.	Abdul Hamid, B.A., age 37, Muhammadan.	700
13	"Musalman"	Ditto	Do.	A. Rasul and M.Rahman, Muhammadans	500
14	"Reis and Raiyet"	Ditto	Do.	Jogesh Chandra Dutt, age 58, a Calcutta house owner.	500
15	"Star of Utkal"	Cuttack	Do.	Kherode Ch.Roy Chowdhry, age 68, retired Head Master of Government College	400
16	"Telegraph"	Calcutta	Do.	Satendra Nath Bose, B.A. age 31.	3,000

The number of Muslims in educational institutions, in services and in elective bodies was deplorably and disproportionately small. They had a legitimate grievance and the partition scheme in as far as it was motivated by a desire to protect and encourage Muslim interests was not without some justification. The extent of injustice to Muslims in the matter of appointment is generally not realized. Some idea of this can be had from the sets of figures given below. It hardly needs to be pointed out that the Bengali control often amounting to monopoly of government offices, of schools and colleges and of elective bodies, itself became an instrument and an incentive, for perpetuating that control unshared. The Muslims of Bengal were indeed not the only victims of Bengali domination: the Biharis, kept out of offices and positions in their own province, had almost as much to complain about.

The number of Muslim students in various types of educational institutions in Bengal during the years 1902-1904 was hopelessly low. The Report on Public Instruction gave the following figures:-

Public Institutions	Total Number of Students		Number of Muslim Students		%age of Muslim students	
	1902-03	1903-04	1902-03	1903-04	1902-03	1903-04
Arts Colleges	8,030	8,009	447	463	5.9	5.8
Professional Colleges	2,488	2,509	119	111	4.8	4.4
High Schools	122,737	126,329	14,356	14,642	11.7	11.6
Middle English Schools	74,943	79,265	11,505	13,021	15.3	16.4
Middle Vernacular Schools	52,570	52,399	9,816	10,458	18.7	20.0
Upper Primary Schools	204,549	225,519	50,983	57,968	27.3	28.6
Lower Primary Schools	1,153,926	1,261,784	319,788	367,783		
Training Schools	1,456	2,234	80	249	5.5	11.1
Technical Schools	12,192	13,049	809	666	6.6	5.1

In 1903-04, out of 2,351 students who passed the University Entrance Examination, only 133 were Muslims; in the Intermediate Examination, out of 1,184 who passed, seventy were Muslims; out of 284 Bachelors of Arts, thirteen were Muslims; out of seventy-nine Masters of Arts, five were Muslims; of Bachelor of Laws, the ratio was 136 to 3 and at B class examination it was 39 to 1. In 1903, of the Vernacular scholarship holders, there were twenty-three Muslim students as against 178 Hindus. Out of twenty-one members of the Central Text Committee, only two were Muslims.<sup>1</sup> In the new Senate of Calcutta University, out of sixty-four Fellows, only three were Muslims.<sup>2</sup>

The positions occupied by Muslims in the Government services formed only a very small proportion of the total. The Mihiro-Sudhakar, a Muslim Bengali newspaper, had often drawn the Government's attention to the fact. It complained that the Muslims were wilfully barred from various posts by the Hindus, since the latter held important positions in the offices of the Government. It recalled the fact that in 1902, eighty Deputy Magistrates were appointed, of whom only one was a Muslim, and that when the various sub-deputy collectors were appointed, not a single Muslim obtained a position. The paper regarded the Civil and Criminal Courts as a "preserve for Hindu clerks".<sup>3</sup> In 1905, out of 133 sub-inspectors appointed

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1. Report on Public Instruction in Bengal, 1903-1904. By A. Pedler, of 9 Oct. 1904; Bengal General Dept., Procs. - Education, 1904, Vol.7035, Procs. 1-2. The E.B. & A. Govt. reported that the Muslim community derived "very little" benefits from the Collegiate and Secondary education in the province. At Dacca College, there were only 20 Muslim students out of a total of 400. In various High Schools, the teachers were practically Hindus except the Persian teacher. See Govt. of E.B. & A. to D.P.I. - 4 March 1906; E.B. & A. Municipal & Appointment Procs., 1906, Vol.7216, L. No.3538, para.2.
  2. The Bengalee - 30 Aug. 1904.
  3. The Mihir-o-Sudhkar (Calcutta) - 19 Dec. 1902; B.N.N.R., No.52.

in the province, the Muslim share was only twelve.<sup>1</sup>

It has often been claimed that the cause of the Muslim grievance of their being invariably accorded lower representation in the Government services lay in their own lack of qualifications and general backwardness in education. In that respect the Muslims were partially to blame themselves. But even if educational qualifications be the only test for appointment to such services, it is clear that the Muslims in Bengal held a much smaller proportion of posts than they were entitled to. In 1901 the number of male Hindus of the age of 20 and over who were literate in English was 13.8 in every 1,000 and of Muslims 2.7 in every thousand. These respective qualifications entitled the Hindus to occupy four times the number of posts held by the Muslims. But in fact they held nine times the number of high appointments. The Hindus held 1,238 of the responsible posts, out of a total of 2,185 and the Muslim share was 141; 56.6% therefore went to Hindus, 6.6% to Muslims. The comparison is shown in detail in the following table:-<sup>2</sup>

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1. The Moslem Chronicle (Calcutta) - 29 April 1905.
  2. Census of India, 1901, Bengal, Vol.VI, Part I, p.506.

## Key:

1. Caste.
2. Covenanted and Statutory Civilians.
3. Deputy and Sub-Deputy Magistrates.
4. Postal Department Officers.
5. High Court Judges.
6. Presidency Magistrates and small Cause Court Judges.
7. Sub-judges and Munsifs.
8. Registration Department Officers.
9. District and Assistant Superintendents of Police.
10. Police Inspectors 1st and 2nd grade.
11. Education Department Officers.
12. Medical Department including Civil Asstt-Surgeons.
13. Public Works Department and District Engineers.
14. Others.
15. Total.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Total	284	492	56	15	10	387	50	99	63	181	220	150	178	2,185
Europeans	255	36	34	11	5	-	1	93	9	25	69	88	148	<sup>95</sup> <del>759</del>
Eurasians	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	19	-	-	-	
Native Christians	-	5	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	-	-	-	11
Muslims	3	67	2	1	3	20	25	2	4	9	-	-	5	141
Hindus	24	384	19	3	2	367	24	4	50	123	151	62	25	1,238

If we exclude other groups (Europeans, Native Christians and Eurasians) and compare the number of posts held by Muslims with those held by Hindus, the Muslim percentage works out to 11.3% and the Hindu 88.7%. In certain departments, such as the Department of Public Works and the Medical Department, there was not a single Muslim, whereas the Hindus occupied 62 and 151 posts respectively. The Muslims held only four posts in the Police Department as against fifty held by Hindus. Thirty

Muslims were sub-judges and munsifs as against 367 Hindus, and sixty-seven Muslims acted as Deputy and sub-deputy magistrates as against 384 Hindus. In the postal department there were two Muslims as against nineteen Hindus and in the Covenanted Services three Muslims as against twenty-four Hindus.<sup>1</sup> The Census Report said that the Muslims had a "very small share of high appointments" which were the "practical monopoly of the Hindus".<sup>2</sup>

It may be argued, and rightly, that the census figures while giving the number of those literate in English of the people belonging to the two communities do not give their exact qualifications, and that the Hindus were better qualified than the Muslims, and therefore occupied more posts. We would therefore examine the number of posts held by the two communities requiring lower qualifications in the following table:-

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1. Census of India, 1901, Bengal, Vol.VI, Part I, p.486.
  2. Ibid., pp.484-5.

Name of Office	Ministerial Officers		Below University Entrance Standard		
	Total	Muslims	Total	Hindus	Muslims
	<u>No.</u>		<u>No.</u>		
1. Chief Secretary's Department	37	6	10	8	0
2. Revenue General Department	43	5	15	11	0
3. Financial and Municipal Department	36	6	8	5	1
4. Co-operative Credit Societies	14	1*	11	10	1
5. Inspector-General Civil Hospitals	15	2	4	3	1
6. Sanitary Commissioner	12	2	5	4	1
7. Inspector-General Prisons	18	2	3	2	1
8. Director of Land Records	9	2	5	4	1
9. Inspector-General Police	27	2	8	5	0
10. Criminal Intelligence Department	12	3	3	2	0
11. Director of Public Institutions	37	7	3	2	0
12. Board of Revenue	40	12	12	8	2
13. Inspector-General Registration	14	6	5	3	2
14. Public Works Department	46	5	19	13	3
15. Legal Remembrancer	6	0	1	1	0
16. Accountant General	207	7	60	50	2
17. Commissioner of Excise & Salt	13	2	4	4	0
Total	586	70	176	135	15
* Temporary					

Thus we see that of the persons having qualifications below the Entrance level, the Muslims held fifteen posts as against one hundred and thirty-five held by the Hindus. They occupied only about eight per cent of the posts as against seventy-seven per cent of the Hindus.<sup>1</sup>

1. Procs., of the Muslim Deputation at Dacca of 3 Feb. 1912; Encl. in Du Boulay to Sharp - 9 Feb. 1912; H.C., Vol. Va7, K.A.O. The figures represented the number of posts at the time of the modification of the partition.

After the formation of the new province, the Government reported that several factors contributed to the failure of the Muslims to obtain as many positions as they had "a right to demand" or were "qualified to hold". Besides the backwardness and poverty of the Muslims, the position of the Hindus was so preponderating that it was difficult for Muslims to get into Government services or "having gained admittance" to retain their positions. The superintendents and assistants in the offices were mostly Hindus. Some of the offices had almost become Hindu "family gatherings". The result was that in the services the Muslims were virtually turned into an "excluded class".<sup>1</sup>

In the districts of East Bengal and Assam, where the Muslim population was about 59.4%, it was reported that in the Police Department, four out of fifty-four Inspectors, sixty out of 484 sub-inspectors, forty-five out of 450 head constables and 1,027 out of 4,594 constables were Muslims.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Govt. of E.B. & A. to Commrs. of Divisions - 25 May 1906; E.B. & A. Appointment & Municipal Procs., 1906, Vol.7775, Circular No.5221-C, para.4.
  2. Govt. of E.B. & A. (Judicial Dept.), to Inspector General of Police - 12 Dec. 1905; No.19. E.B. & A. Judicial Procs., 1906, Vol.7218, Proc. J 6 for Oct. The percentage of the jobs held by the Muslims as against the Hindus was as follows:-

	Muslims	Hindus
Inspectors	7.4%	92.6%
Sub-Inspectors.	10%	49.8%
Constables	22.4%	35.2%

These figures represent the percentages from amongst the Bengali-speaking population; the remaining posts were occupied by men from up country areas with Hindu majority population. It may be noted that for the posts of constables and head constables, no high qualifications were generally required.

While reviewing these figures the E.B. & A. Govt. thought that one of the reasons for the small share of jobs held by Muslims was that the service was mainly composed of Hindus.



The figures for the posts held by Muslims in ministerial services were as follows:

	Percentage of Muslims to total population	Percentage of literate Muslims to total literate population	Percentage of Ministerial posts held by Muslims
Dacca	62.26	25.24	12
Mymensingh	71.36	33.36	9.4
Faridpur	61.89	21.98	8.4
Backergunj	68.31	47.30	13.9
Chittagong	71.70	41.71	21
Noakhali	75.89	49.86	18.5
Tippera	70.57	41.44	19.5
Rajshahi	77.63	55.21	22.4
Dinajpur	49.59	56.57	15.3
Jalpaiguri		36.12	8.3
Rangpur	63.64	46.56	16.7
Bogra	81.85	75.46	36.2
Pabna	74.78	39.44	16.2
Malda	47.96	36.40	17.1

The Muslims were also insufficiently represented in the memberships of Legislative Councils, Municipal, District and Local Boards. Since 1893, thirty-nine persons had been elected to the Bengal Legislative Council, of whom only two were Muslims though the Muslim share ought to have been 11 or 12.<sup>1</sup> Between 1906-9, eighty-eight people were elected to the Local Boards in the Burdwan Division where the Muslims formed thirteen per cent of the population, but only six of these were Muslims; out of fifty-two delegates nominated to the District Boards by the Local Boards of the Division, only one

1. Govt. of Bengal to Govt. of India - 25 Jan. 1909; Encl. in Gov-Gen. to Sec. of State - 22 July 1909; P.L., 1909. Vol.38. Encl. 31 to No.12, L. No.812-A.

Muslim was chosen. Similarly, there were 230 elected Municipal Commissioners in the Division, out of whom nine were Muslims. In the rural areas of the Division, where the Muslim population was 13.6 per cent of the total, the Muslim percentage in representation on Local Boards was 6.4 and only 1.9 on the District Boards. In the municipal areas the Muslims constituted 14.8 per cent of the population while their percentage as elected representatives was 3.9. In Howrah town, where the Muslims formed over a quarter of the total population, there was not a single Muslim Municipal Commissioner in a total of twenty. The same was true of Serampore where the Muslims formed 19% of the population.<sup>1</sup>

Even after the formation of the new province of East Bengal and Assam, the Hindu preponderance continued in the District and Municipal Boards. This was because the Hindus formed a majority of the electoral bodies. The poverty of the majority of Muslims meant that many of them did not qualify to vote. Besides, the electoral rules for the Municipalities as well as the District Boards gave a definite advantage to middle class Hindus. Moreover, the ground landlords in the towns being Hindus, they put "positive obstacles" in the way of Muslims, making it difficult for them to acquire building sites within urban areas.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Govt. of Bengal to Govt. of India - 25 Jan. 1909. I.H.P.P. 1909, Vol.8150, Proc. 223 of Feb. 1909, L. No.812-A, para.6.
  2. Govt. of E.B.& A. to Govt. of India - 23 Jan. 1909; Ibid., Proc. 227 for Feb., para.3.

Appendix C

The Nawab of Dacca's support to the partition was not the result of the loan advanced to him by the Government of India. It was only in keeping with an established practice of the Government to lend money to zamindars and chiefs of an influential class or clan in order to extricate them from their debts that the loan was advanced to the Nawab. As early as 1868, Northcote and John Lawrence had supported the idea of lending money to the needy zamindars and rajahs so that their lands might not fall into the hands of money-lenders.<sup>1</sup> When in September 1906, Hare, the Lieutenant-Governor of East Bengal and Assam recommended a loan of fourteen lakhs of rupees for the Nawab, it was to save the family from the creditors and money-lenders.<sup>2</sup> Hare wrote:

"I have all my service been saving impoverished families and can point to a personal record of many large Hindu estates saved by Government and the Court of Wards on my recommendations".<sup>3</sup>

When the Bengali press knew about the recommendations of the Government about the loan, it soon impugned political motives to it. The Bengalee wrote that it was a mischievous practice to utilise public revenues to save wealthy men, and that it would intensify public feeling raised by the partition.<sup>4</sup> The paper while criticising the government's recommendations as "partaking of a partisan character", forgot its previous stand of not letting public revenues to

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1. Northcote to Lawrence - 18 Feb. 1868; J.L.P., Vols. 29. Also see Lawrence to Northcote - 4 April 1868; Ibid., Vol. 33.
  2. Hare to Minto - 2 Sept. 1906; Minto Papers, M 979.
  3. Hare to Minto - 16 Feb. 1907; Ibid., M 980. Hare stressed that the loan was not to the Nawab alone "who might very well suffer for his extravagance if he could suffer alone", but it was to save the Nawab's family and the numerous dependents. See Hare to Minto - 27 April 1907; Ibid.
  4. The Bengalee - 1 Feb. 1907. Also see the Daily Hitavadi - 2 Feb. 1907; B.N.N.R., No. 6.

be used for saving rich people<sup>1</sup> when it advocated a loan of sixty-five lakhs of rupees to the Rani of Ajudhya.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, Hewett, the Lieutenant-Governor of the United Provinces approached the Government of India for a loan of twenty-five lakhs of rupees to be advanced to the Rani. Besides, Hewett had been able to arrange a loan of about nine lakhs from the talukdars of Oudh, seven lakhs from a creditor who reduced the rate from six per cent to five per cent at Hewett's request and another advance of about four lakhs from the Court of Wards.<sup>3</sup> This loan seemed to have escaped the appreciation of the Bengali press. This could as well be, as it appertained to a different province. But the much maligned government came to the rescue of Prodyat Kumar Tagore as well, who had protested against partition and whose father Jotendra Mohan Tagore, according to Banerjea was in the "deepest sympathy with the movement for the reversal of the Partition", and was one of the pioneers of the agitation.<sup>4</sup> Whereas the Nawab was advanced a loan of fourteen lakhs of rupees, the loan given to Prodyat Kumar Tagore amounted to fifty lakhs and on no different conditions than prescribed for the Nawab.<sup>5</sup>

Thus it would be seen that it was not Lord Curzon's Government which advanced the loan to the Nawab as has been alleged by writers but the arrangement was made much after

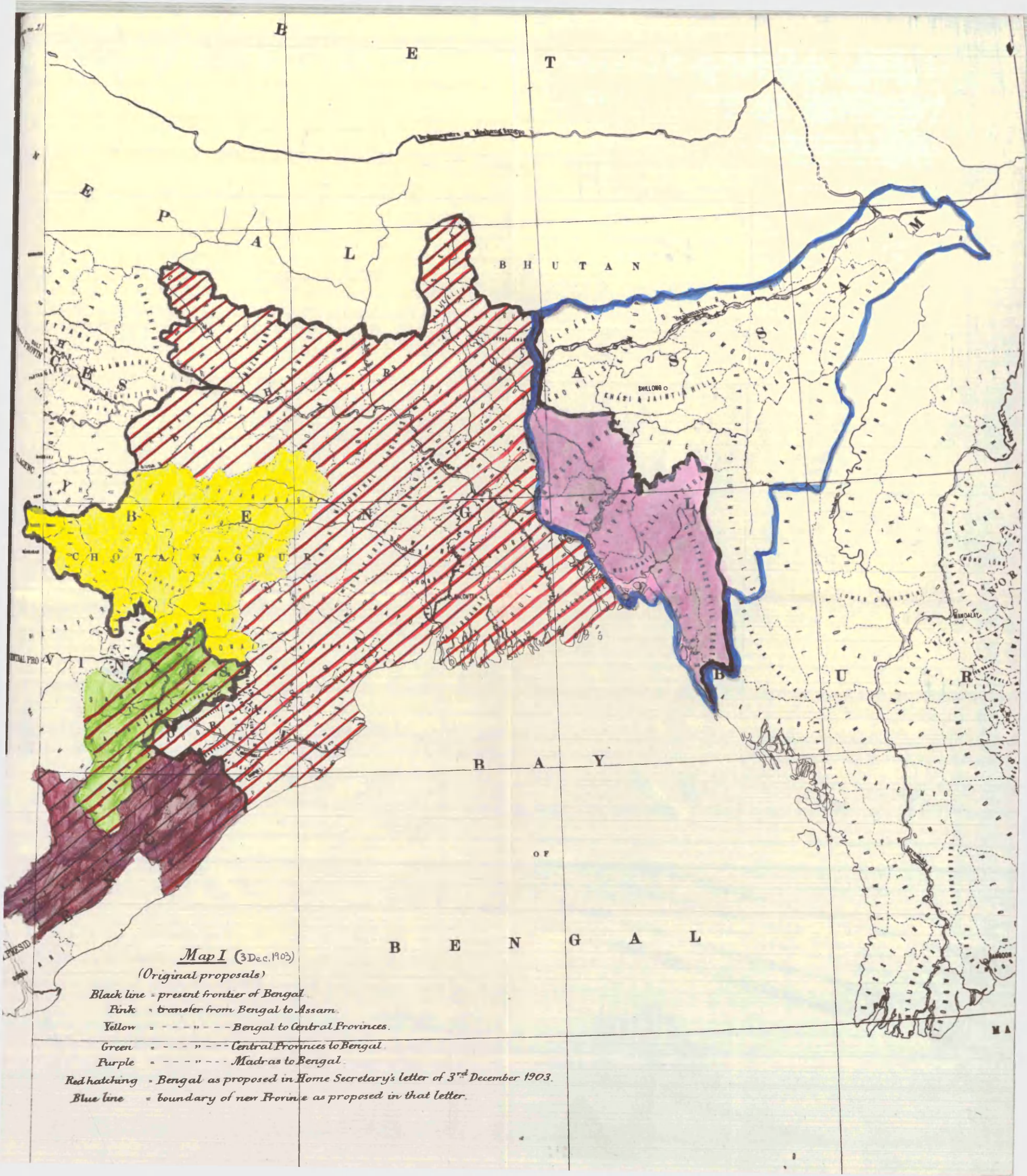
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1. The Bengalee - 15 Feb. 1907.
  2. Ibid., 3 March 1907. Also see the Amrita Bazar Patrika - 4 March 1907; & the Daily Hitavadi - 9 March 1907; B.N.N.R., No.11.
  3. Hewett to Minto - 4 Sept. 1907; Minto Papers, M 981.
  4. Banerjea, op.cit., pp.188-9.
  5. J. & P. Dept., File 1045, Vol.852 of 1908. Questions were also asked in Parliament about the loan. (See O'Donnell's question - 14 May 1907; 171, H.C.Debs., 4s, col.195; & O'Grady's question - 18 June 1907; 176, H.C. Debs., 4s, col.318.) The Daily Hitavadi, with no apparent logic wrote that the loan would widen the breach between Hindus and Muslims. "Wicked Musalmans", observed the paper, "will find in this loan fresh points with which to incite their ignorant co-religionists against Hindus". See the Daily Hitavadi - 14 July 1907; B.N.N.R., No.29.

Minto had taken over.<sup>1</sup> Nor was the Nawab's support for partition due to the loan advanced. In fact the Nawab was an ardent supporter of the scheme of partition from the start and it was well known to the Bengali press which criticised him for his views.<sup>2</sup> Similarly Curzon's stay with the Nawab during his tour of East Bengal should carry no more weight than the hospitality extended to him by Maharaja Surya Kanto Acharya of Mymensingh who opposed the partition.<sup>3</sup> Nevinson was first responsible for the myth about the loan<sup>4</sup> which crept into history and which has been accepted by subsequent historians as a gospel. But Nevinson ought not to have been accepted as an authority for Morley described him as a "true donkey" and warned that

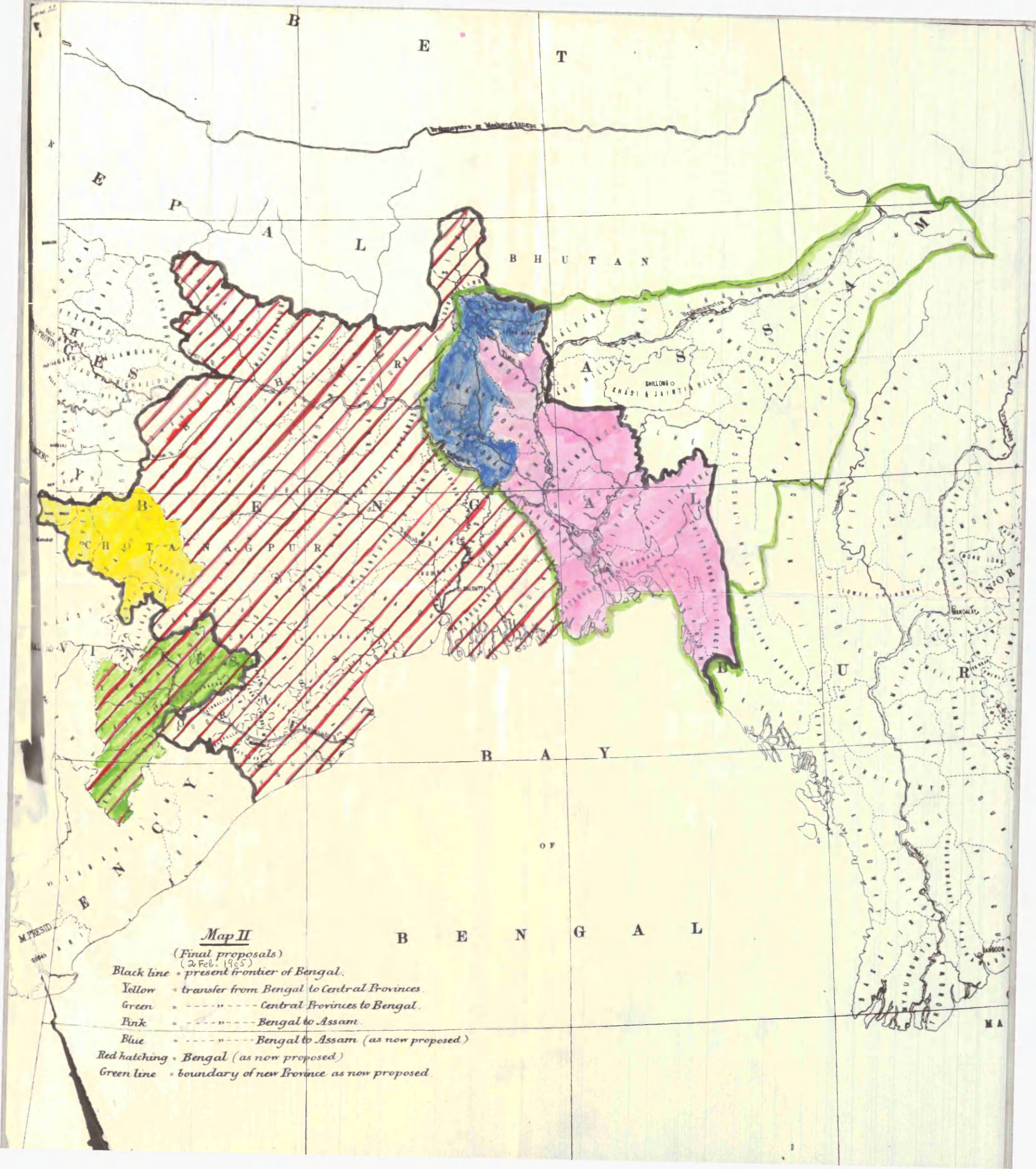
"the donkey tribe is numerous, and not without artful powers of disguising their long ears, until a bray reveals them". 5

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1. Singh, G.H., Landmarks in Indian Constitutional and National Development, p.319; Gopal, R., Indian Muslims, A Political History (1858-1947), p.92; Raghuvanshi, V.P.S., Indian Nationalist Movement and Thought, p.108; Majumdar, R.C., History of the Freedom Movement in India, Vol.II, pp.11-12; Chaudhuri, B.B., Muslim Politics in India, p.12.
  2. The Bengalee - 16 Jan. & 2 Feb. 1904; the Dacca Prakash - 17 Jan. 1904; B.N.N.R., No.4; the Amrita Bazar Patrika - 28 Jan. & 5 Feb. 1904; Ibid., No.6; the Hindoo Patriot - 2 Feb. 1904; Ibid. In Feb. 1904, the Muslim community of Dacca under the leadership of the Nawab also presented an address to Curzon and asked for the formation of a new province.
  3. Banerjea, op.cit., p.188.
  4. Nevinson, op.cit., p.192. (Nevinson gives the figures of the loan as £100,000). Also see O'Donnell, op.cit., p.69. (O'Donnell writes that £20,000 were advanced to the Nawab).
  5. Morley to Minto - 3 Jan. 1908; Morley Papers, Vol.3. Since after the opening of the Minto Papers it was no longer possible to allege that the Nawab supported the partition scheme in lieu of the loan, a new line of argument has been advanced. Das writes that the Government of East Bengal and Assam gained "considerable moral strength" after the creation of the All-India Muslim League which lent support to the partition and that "out of gratitude for the Nawab of Dacca", Hare recommended the loan. (See Das, op.cit., p.179). The argument offered by Das is fallacious as the first suggestion for the loan came in Sept.1906 - at least three months before the formation of the Muslim League. The political advantage of the loan advanced by Hare in his letter to Minto of 27 April 1907 and so much stressed by Das was only to strengthen the case for the loan.









Map II

(Final proposals)  
(2 Feb. 1905)

- Black line = present frontier of Bengal.
- Yellow = transfer from Bengal to Central Provinces.
- Green = " " " " Central Provinces to Bengal.
- Pink = " " " " Bengal to Assam.
- Blue = " " " " Bengal to Assam (as now proposed)
- Red hatching = Bengal (as now proposed)
- Green line = boundary of new Province as now proposed.